

THE TIMES

No. 66,434

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 1999

http://www.the-times.co.uk

No sex please,
we're American
page 17

THE
SAFE
SKI
GUIDE
page 5

POSH & BECKS
So rich,
so in love,
so ordinary
page 19

30p
EVERY
WEEKDAY

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS taken page 38 PLUS 12 pages of ADVERTISING

Economy heading towards brink of recession

BY JANET BUSH AND PHILIP WEBSTER

BRITAIN will move perilously close to recession over the next few months, the Bank of England admitted yesterday as it predicted that growth would be "close to zero" for the first half of this year.

Even after that, it expects growth to reach only 0.5 to 1 per cent for 1999 as a whole.

The predictions were couched with a promise from the Bank to go on cutting interest rates as much as necessary, but the gloomy forecast prompted Tories to accuse the Government of driving the economy to the brink of recession.

Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, said that Labour's higher taxes, penalties for sav-

ing and reckless spending sprees had been disastrous.

"Unless the Government uses the Budget to rectify some of their blunders, Britain will pay the price in lost jobs and closed businesses."

And in the Commons, William Hague and Tony Blair clashed over the Government's economic record with the Tory leader claiming that Labour had added £260 to everyone's tax bill.

The Bank — like the Treasury — had previously looked for growth of around 1 per cent this year. But Mervyn King, the Bank's Deputy Governor, said that even though the forecast was now lower, the Bank's odds on recession were the same as they had been

when its last *Inflation Report* was published in November; one in four.

Lower interest rates would offset the slower growth, Mr King said, and he hinted strongly at further cuts. The Monetary Policy Committee — which last week reduced base rates for the fifth time in as many months — had not reached a "pause", he said, adding that without last week's half-point, the committee would have underscored the Government's 2.5 per cent target for underlying inflation.

Mr King explicitly admitted that some members of the MPC believe that the Bank's latest inflation forecasts were too high, which one economist said was "Bank speak" for a disagreement on rates that suggested some members were pushing for a bigger cut last week.

Mr King acknowledged that the state of the world economy was, if anything, looking more hazardous now than it did late last year, citing in particular the deep uncertainty in Brazil after its devaluation. He also said the world appeared to be returning to a 1960s style era of low inflation, moving away from what he described as the abnormal inflationary decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

Although the Bank is more pessimistic about growth in the short-term, it is more optimistic than it was in November about the economy's ability to bounce back. The Bank is predicting that recovery will start from the middle of this year, with growth picking up sharply next year and in 2001.

The Confederation of British Industry showed little alarm at the new forecasts, arguing that the prospect of slower growth justified another half-point cut in rates. But the Conservatives will use the figures to step up their onslaught against the Government in the run-up to the Budget.

Yesterday Mr Hague accused the Prime Minister of "conveniently forgetting" his pre-election promises not to raise taxes. He urged Mr Blair to add together figures from the last two budgets. "They show that the total tax increase for this financial year... is £6,800 million which is £260 for every taxpayer in the country, in pension taxes, in petrol taxes, in mortgage taxes. He does not seem to be aware of it all."

Mr Blair replied that under Labour the spending deficit had been slashed, employment was up and mortgage rates were at a 30-year low.

Peter Riddell, page 12



ers and reckless spending sprees had been disastrous. "Unless the Government uses the Budget to rectify some of their blunders, Britain will pay the price in lost jobs and closed businesses."

And in the Commons, William Hague and Tony Blair clashed over the Government's economic record with the Tory leader claiming that Labour had added £260 to everyone's tax bill.

The Bank — like the Treasury — had previously looked for growth of around 1 per cent this year. But Mervyn King, the Bank's Deputy Governor, said that even though the forecast was now lower, the Bank's odds on recession were the same as they had been

TV & RADIO	47, 48
WEATHER	24
CROSSWORDS	24, 48
LETTERS	21
OBITUARIES	23
A KALETSKY	20
ARTS	34-37
CHESS & BRIDGE	42
COURT & SOCIAL	22
LAW REPORT	33
BODY & MIND	18
TRAVEL	41

Buying The Times overseas:
AUS \$6.50; Belgium & P Fr 10; Canada
\$3.50; Canada Ps 40; Cyprus Ps 11.20; Denmark
Fr 22.00; Finland Fr 20.50; France
Fr 17.00; Germany DM 5.50; Gibraltar 90p;
Greece Dr 7.50; Ireland Ps 4.50; Italy L.
2.00; Japan Y 110; Malta Ps 1.50; Mexico 300;
Malta Mts 100; Norway Kr 25.00; Portugal Esc 20; Spain Ps 4.00; Switz.
Sfr 25.00; Switzerland 5 Frs 6.00; Turkey
Lira 3,200; USA \$3.50.
For delivery to the US by air, add \$1.50.
For delivery to the US by air, add \$1.50.
For delivery to the US by air, add \$1.50.

Olympic scandal spreads wider

More than 20 per cent of the 115-person membership of the International Olympic Committee are now implicated in the "gifts-for-votes" Salt Lake City Winter Games scandal. Yesterday ten more members were linked to the affair which involves hundreds of thousands of pounds of perks for IOC members.... Page 16

New Bill targets single mothers

Single mothers will have to attend interviews with Benefit Agency staff soon after their babies are born or risk losing all their state payments. Alastair Darling, the Social Security Secretary, described the measures in the Welfare Reform Bill as harsh but justifiable.... Page 12

Hearts removed

The hearts of more than 170 children who died at the Royal Children's Hospital were kept for educational purposes without the consent of their parents, who were said to be horrified that they were buried without their hearts.... Page 6

Spain threatens Rock road and air traffic

By DOMINIC SEARLE IN GIBRALTAR AND MICHAEL BINNION, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

GIBRALTAR was yesterday thrown back to the siege of Franco's days when Spain announced that it would ban all drivers with a Gibraltar licence from its roads and threatened to stop all flights to the Rock across its territory.

Traffic across the Gibraltar frontier with Spain was at a virtual standstill, with delays of up to six hours as officials thronged the flow. Within hours of the Spanish announcement, a driver was turned back by Spanish police who refused to recognise his licence.

Britain reacted sharply and swiftly. The Foreign Office denounced the Spanish proposals to bar overlanders, saying that it was "extraordinary and unprecedented" for a European Union member to impose such a ban on a fellow EU member.

It also issued a reminder to Madrid that under EU law, each state is obliged to recognise the driving licence of a fellow state under the terms of the Second Driving Licence Requirement.

The sudden worsening of relations came after an agreement signed last week between Gibraltar and local Spanish fishermen which infuriated Spain.

An angry and deeply embarrassed Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister, announced the new restrictions to the Spanish Parliament as part of a "panoply of possible measures" intended to put pressure on Gibraltar.

He made clear that Spain was particularly annoyed with Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, for backing the agreement. Senior Matutes claimed that Britain had failed to stand by a verbal agreement on fishing around the Rock reached between himself and Mr Cook. "We have been the victims of broken promises by a friend and ally," he said.

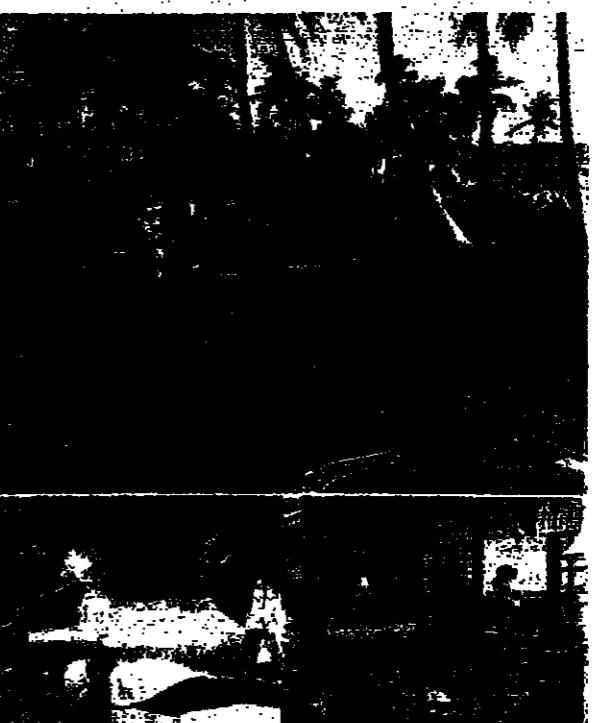
Mr Cook may try to telephone the Spanish Foreign Minister within the next day or two to resolve the widening row. He and Señor Matutes tried on at least seven occasions to phone each other last week, but never got through. Each was using a mobile phone while travelling. The Spanish minister insists that he is still trying to reach Mr Cook, but has made no effort to do so from a land line.

Peter Caruana, Gibraltar's Chief Minister, said last night: "Spain appears to be implementing its threatened campaign of attrition against British Gibraltar."

Mr Caruana added: "The blockade is a gross breach of EU law."

Britain "vomited" last night that inter-state agreement at the European Commission. "We stand up for Gibraltar," insisted Mr Cook's spokesman. "We do not

commented on page 2, col 4



One price to pay for one holiday of a lifetime.

The best choice of up to eight superb restaurants. The finest accommodation, with a range of suites. All sporting activities from golf to scuba diving (with free tuition), or relax at one of our spas. At Sandals Ultra All-Inclusive resorts for couples only, we provide the very best all included in the price of your holiday. One more reason why we have been voted The World's Best by travel agents worldwide for the past five years.

Sandals®
For full details contact your travel agent or call
0800 742 742
The Caribbean's most exclusive Ultra All-Inclusive
for couples only with 16 resorts to choose from in

Declaration on human rights — for chimps

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

NEW ZEALAND could be the first country in the world to give the great apes "human" rights that could be enforced by a court.

A group of 38 lawyers, scientists and philosophers has submitted a new clause to a Bill going through Parliament which would give gorillas, chimpanzees and orang-utans the right to life, the right not to suffer cruel or degrading treatment and the right not to take part in all but the most benign of experiments. Anyone who believed a

great ape was being mistreated would have the right to intervene — although that is an unlikely scenario since there are only 34 great apes in the country, all of which are well cared-for.

The idea is to set a precedent that other countries can follow," Dr David Penny, a biologist from Massey University in Palmerston North, said.

The campaign to acknowledge that apes have rights has been led by the Great Ape Project, which has also petitioned the United Nations to issue a declaration containing the same provisions that the New Zealand group pro-

mises, plus the right not to be imprisoned "without due legal process".

But many biologists fear that once apes have rights, it will not be long before rats do, too. Frans de Waal, director of the Yerkes Regional Primate Research Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, said: "If you argue for rights on the basis of equality between us and the great apes, then you have to argue community between apes and monkeys and so on, until eventually even the humblest lab rat wins rights. After all, dogs can form deep emotional attachments and cats seem to have distinct personalities."

Peter Singer, a philosopher at Monash University in Melbourne who founded the Great Ape Project, said there was no reason not to give chimpanzees rights: "There is no logical reason for the broadening of moral concern to cease with humans."

Mr Singer has argued that apes such as the chimpanzee — which shares 98 per cent of the same genes as human beings — should be granted the same rights as intellectually disabled children. But opponents of the campaign argue that apes are still fundamentally different from human beings.

Railway firms under fire for late trains

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

ONLY one of Britain's 25 train companies qualified for top marks yesterday under a new grading system designed to shame the worst performers on the rail network.

For the first time, train operators have been given grades between A and E, depending on their performance over the last year.

Ministers and rail regulators say that a simplified system of marking performance is needed to expose companies that fail to improve their punctuality and reliability.

Only the eight-mile-long Island Line on the Isle of Wight was able to achieve an A grade for both punctuality and the number of cancellations.

All 25 firms were given a grade according to both the number of trains delayed and the number cancelled. An overall grade was then awarded, based on the lower of the two

scores. John O'Brien, the rail franchising director who compiled the grading system, admitted that some companies had suffered "rough justice" in the way they were graded but insisted that improvements needed to be made.

Mr O'Brien confirmed the findings of a survey by *The Times* which showed last week that the majority of routes in Britain had suffered a fall in punctuality during 1998. He said that punctuality remained the major problem for train companies, with 37 of the 68 route groups worsening.

"Punctuality remains poor and these results are not good enough," said Mr O'Brien yesterday.

But when Mr O'Brien put Silverlink Trains at the bottom of his league table, he must have allowed himself a wry smile, for the company, which runs commuter services into

London, takes him to work each day from his home in Berkhamsted.

He has not disguised his frustration as a fare-paying passenger at the quality of service that caused huge disruption to his journeys to and from work last September and October.

John Reid, the Transport Minister, said: "Once again performance figures are disappointing. Passengers are getting a poor service and this is unacceptable."

Dr Reid and John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, are staging a public "rail summit" on February 25, at which train operators and Railtrack, the track and signalling company, must put forward plans to reduce delays.

James Gordon, director general of the Association of Train Operating Companies, said: "Punctuality is proving a hard nut to crack in the face of unprecedented growth." Passenger numbers have risen at some seven per cent each year since privatisation.

Train companies yesterday criticised the latest system of grading performance as too vague in offering only a "snapshot" of current performance, without comparing with previous results. The tables showed Virgin's CrossCountry line had the poorest marks for punctuality while ScotRail had the best.

The shake-up in the way that train operators' performance is published also includes, for the first time, greater details of the number of trains run. The new information suggests that some 50,000 peak-time trains - one in six of the total - are delayed each month.

The Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee said the performance by companies on some routes was "truly awful" and that performance was not improving despite incentives.

Commentary, page 27
Reform urged, page 30

TRAIN OPERATOR PERFORMANCE					
Train operator	Average number trains monitored over 4 weeks	Year ending Dec 1998 Punctuality	Reliability	Average grade	Overall grade
CATEGORY A					
Island Line	1,714	95.9	99.4	A	A
ScotRail	44,203	95.9	99.4	A	A
Merseyrail & Electrics	13,274	95.3	99.3	B	B
Central (excluding Cetra)	13,038	95.1	99.3	B	B
Anglo Railways	5,626	92.0	99.5	A	A
WAGN	12,691	91.7	99.1	B	B
Great Eastern	14,748	90.8	99.6	A	A
Gatwick Express	4,415	90.1	99.6	A	A
CATEGORY C					
TCS Rail	5,638	94.0	99.5	C	C
Northern Spire	2,420	90.7	99.5	C	C
Hales & West	13,537	91.2	99.5	C	C
Chesapeake South Central	32,407	90.0	99.5	C	C
Thameslink	5,462	90.1	99.5	C	C
Midland Main Line	1,465	90.0	99.6	C	C
South West Trains	37,385	90.5	99.7	C	C
Great North Eastern	2,382	88.3	99.2	B	B
Chiltern Railways	4,854	88.4	99.4	B	B
West Coast	13,276	88.9	99.6	A	A
CATEGORY D					
North Western Trains	35,428	89.2	99.7	D	D
Central Railway	7,050	88.1	99.1	D	D
Great Western	2,411	84.5	99.6	B	B
Connex South Eastern	21,407	85.7	99.6	B	B
Thames Valley	15,458	85.7	99.6	B	B
Cross Country	2,223	82.3	99.3	C	C
CATEGORY E					
Silverlink Trains	10,966	51.3	87.9	E	E

Punctuality grades A - 95.5 and above; B - 90, C - 85; D - 80; E - Below 80
Reliability (journeys completed) grades A - 99.5 and above, B - 99, C - 98.5
D - 98, E - Below 98

Source: DTI/RP

THE CHANNEL 4 POLITICAL AWARDS

They'll be there on Sunday...

House Award for Outstanding Political Achievement

Rising Star of the Year

Channel 4 News Viewers Award

Political Humourist

Most Effective Speechmaker

Parliamentary Questioner

Peer of the Year

Political Journalist

Political Book of the Year

but where will they be next year?



Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, gets to grips yesterday with a battering ram used by police against drug dealers in his Livingstone constituency

Spain bars Rock cars

Continued from page 1

not want this to become a great battle between us and the Spanish Government."

So intense were General Franco's threats against the Rock in 1967 that Harold Wilson, Prime Minister, had military contingency plans prepared for an invasion. Such a move is unthinkable today but more petty measures were eventually relaxed.

The first wave came in 1967 when access to Spain became limited for Gibraltarians and oxygen supplies for the local hospital were cut off. Even after wine for the predominantly Catholic population was refused and as 1969 approached female and later male labour were withdrawn access to the Rock. When the iron gates finally slammed closed for 16 years in July 1969

only the dead were allowed free passage. Telephone and postal services were cut off. So severe were air restrictions around the Rock that aircraft, both military and civilian, were forced to approach over the centre of the bay of Gibraltar and make a sharp turn onto the narrow runway. These restrictions were eventually relaxed.

Britain yesterday rejected Spain's complaint to the EU Commission last month that Gibraltar had failed to put into law 51 directives. It told the Commission that 31 of these directives had become Gibraltar law. Of the remaining 20, seven were not applicable because Gibraltar was outside the customs union. Two were irrelevant to the Rock and a further seven were in the final stages of transposition into draft legislation.

Amy's strange adventure in Lucky Tie's den



POLITICAL SKETCH

How did it look to Amy?

Tony Blair was observed yesterday at Prime Minister's Questions from a special guest, Amy, 14, from Herfordshire, who phoned in while Mr Blair was appearing on *This Morning* with Richard and Judy last week to tell us about his wife's swimsuits and Glenn Hoddle.

Blair's propagandists' eye on the main chance, arranged for Amy to be carted in to Westminster to watch the PM joust.

Poor girl. She could have been listening to Cleopatra CDs on her Walkman. Instead she chose a crowd of jeering middle-aged men with soap-stained ties. The child is unimpressed.

When first she entered the Strangers' Gallery, ushered in by inexplicable men in black tights, the hall she saw was half empty. A grey-haired lady with the air of a head teacher was sitting in a sort of ornamental bus-shelter at one end, keeping discipline.

A crowd arrived — and in walked Amy's new friend, the Prime Minister, wearing his "lucky" tie (silver with green blobs) and an inane grin. Amy Allen invited to watch Westminster joust.

For no apparent reason a man began to rant about land reform in the Highlands while Blair tried not to look bored. What did Amy make of this?

"William Hague" announced the lady in the bus-shelter. A youngish man, almost completely bald, with a Yorkshire accent, got up. Something seemed to have upset him. He started shouting about the Foreign Office being an old hanger. Mr Blair was plainly derailed.

But now Mr Lucky Tie came over all queer. He ummed and ah'd and looked sick as a parrot. Blair shouted even louder — about customs raids. Lucky Tie's grin fixed, then faded, as Barryballistic, hurling abuse, questions and sneering jokes, while those behind him screamed "Hear hear" and "Ha ha" and those behind Blair shouted "Rubbish!"

Then Baldy leapt up again and yelled something about tax. Luck Tie got crosser and crosser but avoided the question. Baldy shouted that he knew the answer anyway — and gave it. Amy will have wondered why, in that case, he had asked the question. Enraged, Lucky Tie worked himself up into a cry of "Tory boom and bust" — at which those behind him gave a terrific cheer.

Baldy subsided again. An elderly gentleman from Tynes invited Lucky Tie to accompany him mackerel fishing, adding that they wouldn't catch any lucky. Tie said "Thanks" but he was getting tired of invitations from this fellow. And, within minutes, they had all rushed out of the chamber.

Amy will have departed too. On Monday she told the Prime Minister that she was interested in politics. If she is still interested in politics, she needs her head seeing to.

A 'good fella', but America is still vague about Hague

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

WILLIAM HAGUE arrived in America last night to meet senior Republicans. The first item on his agenda should be to explain who he is.

The highlight is a meeting with George W. Bush, Governor of Texas and son of former President Bush. A favourite for the next presidential election, Mr Bush was just a little confused about Mr Hague.

Acknowledging his visitor, Mr Bush said: "Who? Alexander?" apparently referring to Alexander Haig, Richard Nixon's chief of staff and a former Nato commander. When a reporter said no, William, the Governor rallied but appeared to think that the Leader of the Opposition held some sort of government position.

Mr Bush, who has yet to declare a run for the White House in 2000, said that Sir

Christopher Meyer, the British Ambassador to Washington, had visited him last week and they had talked about "Minister" Hague. "He told me that he's a good fella" and a leader in your country. I'm looking forward to his visit."

Asked what they would talk about Mr Bush said: "I'm not absolutely sure. I'm honoured that he would choose to come." Prompted that Mr Hague is keen to learn about the brand of "compassionate conservatism" that has made him a presidential frontrunner, he talked enthusiastically about his policies but said that he would tell Mr Hague: "First you have to win. You've got to be in a position to implement policy."

Mr Hague, who arrived in New York last night and was due in Washington to-day, will not visit Tony Blair's close friend President Clinton.

Because his trip has the misfortune of coinciding with the culmination of the impeachment proceedings, he is expected to meet only relatively junior members of the Republican leadership on Capitol Hill.

At Washington's National Press Club, he will make a speech about what British and American conservatives can learn from each other just as every journalist in the capital is consumed by the end of the trial.

Accompanied by his wife, Fiona, he will see Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor of New York and Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State, as well as conservative leaders in Canada.

Blair aims to break Ulster deadlock

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

A PERSONAL push to break the deadlock over decommissioning of terrorist weapons is being planned by Tony Blair.

Government sources disclosed yesterday that the Prime Minister could return to Stormont for a round of talks if the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein fail to reach a compromise in time for next month's deadline for the transfer of legislative powers from London to Belfast.

Mr Blair was present for the day and night negotiations that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Parties at the Northern Ireland Assembly are due to begin a major debate on Monday when proposals for the creation of ten ministerial departments and six cross-border institutions are likely to be endorsed.

However, the issue of IRA decommissioning is expected to then bring deadlock and there are fears that it will be nowhere near meeting the March 10 deadline.

Be more productive. Don't go to the office

ONLY £200 PER EMPLOYEE

Apparently, people who work away from the office achieve twenty percent more. Your company can improve productivity in this way by using Racal Telecom's new managed corporate teleworking service. Called Nsure Remote, it gives staff quick, secure dial-up access to your network for the cost of a local call, whether they're at home or out in the field. In fact, it's just like being at work, only better.

Call free 0800 692 5000 www.racaltelecom.com/teleworking

Racal Telecom

RACAL

and "No!" and the bus shelter lady screamed "Order!"

All at once, Baldy subsided. A man from Cheshire told Lucky Tie something about the millennium bug that he seemed to know already.

A tall Scout-leader type asked two questions, about arms exports and Africa. Lucky Tie seemed unwilling to answer them, so he answered a different question. "Bye-bye Paddy!" shouted an elderly man, in a rude way. What was Amy making of this?

A gawping fellow with swivelling eyes boomed out something complicated about illegitimacy and marriage. The man's friends, sitting around him, looked embarrassed. Lucky Tie did not seem to want to answer this either. Everyone started shouting.

From her bus-shelter the lady in buckled shoes and tights flew into a rage and began to scream and shout. This may have startled Amy, but in the chamber they behaved as though it was completely normal.

Then Baldy leapt up again and yelled something about tax. Luck Tie got crosser and crosser but avoided the question. Baldy shouted that he knew the answer anyway — and gave it. Amy will have wondered why, in that case, he had asked the question. Enraged, Lucky Tie worked himself up into a cry of "Tory boom and bust" — at which those behind him gave a terrific cheer.

Baldy subsided again. An elderly gentleman from Tynes invited Lucky

Marquess puts paid to wife's open invitation

HE is an aristocratic City financier and heir to a large chunk of Gloucestershire. She is a former actress who dresses in second-hand clothes and has devoted herself to the environmental protest movement.

So married life was never going to be dull for the Marquess of Worcester and his Marchioness, formerly known as the actress Tracy Ward. And although Lord Worcester did not join his wife in the latest eco-action he was usually prepared to give moral support until now, that is.

On Sunday, Lady Worcester appeared on a television discussion programme and seemed to issue an open invitation to every "greenie, gypsy and New Age traveller" to set up camp on her father-in-law's Badminton estate. The scenes afterwards in the kitchen at the couple's rambling Dower House on the edge of the Duke of Beaufort's 52,000 acre estate can only be imagined.

Lady Worcester, 40, whose husband will one day inherit the land and its 40-room stately home, admitted that idealism had got the better of her during a debate on local television.

Having defended the residents of Tinker's Bubble, an "eco-village" in Somerset, she was asked whether she would have any objection if they decided to put up their tents and wigwams at Badminton. Lady Worcester replied: "I would

Husband said eco-activists would not be welcome, writes Simon de Bruxelles

love it. They are nice people. They understand about sustainable living."

Yesterday, however, the mother-of-three said she wanted to "clarify" that statement. "I would love them to come and set up in my back yard, but it's just not possible."

For concerned Badminton residents and farmers my Utopian community housing has been rejected categorically by Harry, who will not be selling any land to accommodate my dreams."

It is not the first time the couple have clashed over Lady Worcester's environmental ambitions. She is on record as saying her 40-year-old Eton-educated husband drew the line at using "recycled" lavatory paper. The marquess also vetoed plans to create a compost lavatory so that household waste could fertilise their roses and the vegetable garden. This was, however, of an entirely different order of magnitude.

An apologetic Lady Worces-

ter said: "This isn't a case of 'not in my back yard'."

"I would love them to come and create a blueprint for sustainable living here. We are like-minded people. But I do not own a single acre of land and Harry is not selling any and does not want any development here. We have never needed to discuss it before now but I have to make my comments clear."

"I think most people would not object to these people living close to their homes if they legitimately bought the land to live in harmony with it."

The couple, who married in 1987, have two sons Bobby, ten, and Xan, three, and a seven-year-old daughter Bella. Lady Worcester, known as Tracy Worcester in the environmental movement, is a trustee of Friends of the Earth, the Soil Association and Transport 2000. She is also an associate director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture, president of both Community Action and the Good Gardeners' Association. She was a leading campaigner against the Newbury bypass and is a familiar face at environmental protests.

In the 1980s Tracy Ward, whose sister is the actress Rachel Ward, was better known for her part in the cheesy television series *Cats' Eyes* and her role as Miss Scarlet in a short-lived television version of *Cluedo*. Last year she stood for selection as a Green Party candidate in the European elections but withdrew over her refusal to condemn fox-hunting. The Beaufort Hunt reigns at the heart of the hunting establishment.

The marquess, Henry John Fitzroy Somerset, known to friends as Bunter, the heir to the 11th Duke of Beaufort, prefers to keep a lower profile despite his 6ft 6in frame.

His father's estate hosts the annual three-day Badminton Horse Trials every May. It attracts an international field of riders and nearly half-a-million spectators — and definitely no wigwams.



Tinker's Bubble: Marchioness invited them all home

ter said: "This isn't a case of 'not in my back yard'."

"I would love them to come and create a blueprint for sustainable living here. We are like-minded people. But I do not own a single acre of land and Harry is not selling any and does not want any development here. We have never needed to discuss it before now but I have to make my comments clear."

"I think most people would not object to these people living close to their homes if they legitimately bought the land to live in harmony with it."

The couple, who married in 1987, have two sons Bobby, ten, and Xan, three, and a seven-year-old daughter Bella. Lady Worcester, known as Tracy Worcester in the environmental movement, is a trustee of Friends of the Earth, the Soil Association and Transport 2000. She is also an associate director of the International Society for Ecology and Culture, president of both Community Action and the Good Gardeners' Association. She was a leading campaigner against the Newbury bypass and is a familiar face at environmental protests.

In the 1980s Tracy Ward, whose sister is the actress Rachel Ward, was better known for her part in the cheesy television series *Cats' Eyes* and her role as Miss Scarlet in a short-lived television version of *Cluedo*. Last year she stood for selection as a Green Party candidate in the European elections but withdrew over her refusal to condemn fox-hunting. The Beaufort Hunt reigns at the heart of the hunting establishment.

The marquess, Henry John Fitzroy Somerset, known to friends as Bunter, the heir to the 11th Duke of Beaufort, prefers to keep a lower profile despite his 6ft 6in frame.

His father's estate hosts the annual three-day Badminton Horse Trials every May. It attracts an international field of riders and nearly half-a-million spectators — and definitely no wigwams.

Couple on run from family's hit men

By ROLAND WATSON AND PAUL WILKINSON

A DEATH sentence imposed by a British Asian family on their daughter and her husband is still troubling the couple six years after they eloped.

Ann Cryer, the Labour MP for Keighley, told the Commons yesterday that the parents of Zenia Briggs (not her real name) had hired hit men to track her down because she refused to marry a first cousin who lived in Pakistan.

During a debate on women's rights, Mrs Cryer told MPs that Mrs Briggs and her husband lived in perpetual fear of the family. Mrs Cryer also told of another woman who was on the run because her mother had threatened to kill her after she fled from an abusive husband.

"Our Asian women constituents are perfectly entitled to expect the same human rights that are afforded to us... They are also entitled to expect us to help them to enjoy those human rights," Mrs Cryer said.

In reply, Mike O'Brien, the junior Home Office minister, said there was no evidence that arranged marriages were less successful than others, but said: "The Government is aware of the issues of forced marriages. The victims are very small in number but their voice will not be ignored."

Rembrandt self-portrait not the whole picture

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A PAINTING of Rembrandt was always praised as a masterpiece among his self-portraits. The fact that it was not quite in his usual style was said to add to its importance.

At the same time, a somewhat rougher painting in another gallery was held to be just a copy. But not any more.

Yesterday the more famous painting was declared to be the copy, while the rougher version emerged as the true work of the master. The switch in attitude by scholars was reported by Neil MacGregor, the Director of the National Gallery, which is planning to include both images as a draw to its exhibition of Rembrandt self-portraits this summer.

The demoted painting from 1629 comes from the Mauritshuis in The Hague. He said:



Less is more: the copy, left, and the rougher original

"It was long regarded as one of the supreme early portraits. It is almost certainly a copy." Doubts were first raised in 1991 by a German scholar, Claus Grimm, but his view was discounted as the painting was considered so fine.

David Bomford, the National Gallery's senior restorer of paintings, recalled how "everyone" said: "What a quaint idea." "The quality of the painting 'seduced people', he said. Even though the style is not entirely in keeping with Rembrandt's hand, scholars were convinced that it was a masterpiece that "stands alone" among his works.

In retrospect, Mr Bomford said, scholars should have questioned its uniqueness further. The other picture, in the Germanisches National Museum

in Nuremberg, was regarded as "a rough copy, interesting but not terribly important", although the rough, granular handling of the paint was more typical of Rembrandt. What clinched the Grimm theory was scientific analysis — infra-red reflectography, conducted by the Mauritshuis — and bringing together the two versions for the first time in Nuremberg.

Tests on the Mauritshuis portrait revealed underdrawing that a copyist would do if setting down a composition. Dr Bomford said that the Mauritshuis was "not in the least bit dismayed", but Nuremberg is "extremely pleased".

Peter van der Ploeg, a senior curator at the Mauritshuis, said they were now researching who painted their picture. Among the contenders are artists who worked in Rembrandt's studio, such as Gerard Dou or Jan Lievens. They are considered masters in their own right. Rembrandt used to get his pupils to copy his self-portraits as exercises.

The exhibition from June 9 to September 5 is jointly organised by the National Gallery and the Mauritshuis. The National Gallery has urged Parliament to push through legislation allowing the Burrell Collection to lend a Rembrandt to the Mauritshuis, where the exhibition will be shown from September. Burrell will stipulate there be no loans abroad.

'Asylo': a singular new currency

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

A BLACK MARKET has been created in supermarket tokens issued to asylum-seekers to buy basics, such as food, with the refugees selling them for cash to buy non-essential items such as cigarettes. The Home Office, which is planning to replace cash payments to refugee families with shelters and food tokens, was warned that the fraud in tokens could eventually reach £20 million a year.

The problem is great in Kent, where there are 2,600 asylum-seekers, and the joke among refugee organisations is that Britain has its own single European cur-

rency — the "Asylo". The asylum-seekers sell their vouchers, with the exchange rate being 60p cash for every £1 in tokens. Middlemen sell them on for 90p.

Vouchers are central to the Government's policy of being faster, firmer and fairer in dealing with applications for asylum. From 2001 all refugees should be told within two months whether their application has been accepted, with an appeal completed in another four. During that time they will get free housing, and vouchers instead of money for essentials.

A voucher economy has already emerged because councils are statutorily required to feed and shelter destitute si-

gle adult asylum-seekers, but forbidden from giving them money. Town halls have created a patchwork of voucher systems. Under most of them, the vouchers are issued in the name of a shop, such as a branch of a particular supermarket, but with nothing to identify the user. Asylum-seeking families with children now get money to buy essentials such as milk and nappies, but the Government proposes to make them use vouchers too.

Marty Ayre, a social services official at Kent County Council, told a Local Government Association seminar yesterday that the vouchers were an administrative nightmare.

PC told stewardess 'don't drive in my county'

By CAROLINE SIGLEY

A POLICE constable flashed his warrant card at a senior air stewardess and warned her never to drive through his county after she refused to serve him a bottle of gin, a court was told yesterday.

PC Richard Perrett, 26, is also alleged to have told three police officers: not to cross the border into West Yorkshire after they met him off a flight from Florida to Manchester in February last year.

The threat followed drunken, abusive and bawdy behaviour by PC Perrett, his father, Inspector David Perrett, and Peter Beck, a publican, Manchester Crown Court was told.

All three men from Halifax deny drunkenness on board the Britannia Airways flight.

Angela Meddings, a cabin manager, said PC Perrett had asked for a bottle of gin and ten cans of tonic. He was told that he could buy the gin but not consume it on board. She said: "He then produced a warrant card and said words to the effect of 'Come on, we're all on the same team'."

She told him it was not Britannia Airways policy to allow passengers to drink from litre bottles, to which he allegedly replied: "Never come to West Yorkshire or never drive through West Yorkshire."

After complaints, the men had their passports confiscated. They were also escorted from the plane by police.

The court was told how PC Perrett had told PC Terry Cornforth, PC Ian Hambleton and Inspector Brian Hulley that they should not drive or pass through West Yorkshire.

PC Hambleton said that "the whole plane erupted in cheers and applause as we cracked them off". All three officers said that the defendants were unsteady on their feet and had slurred speech.

Inspector Perrett, 49, who has served with the West Yorkshire force for 28 years, denied grinning to scenes from *The Full Monty*. "I wasn't drunk. I expect that as a group we may have been jovial."

The hearing continues.

(PA News)



Getty: escapes US taxes

Getty son gets Irish passport for £1m

By AUDREY MAGEL
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

TARA GETTY, son of the oil heir Sir John Paul Getty, has obtained an Irish passport after investing £1 million in an Irish company, it emerged yesterday. His new nationality allows him to circumvent American tax laws on income and inheritance.

Mr Getty, 29, who married a farmer's daughter from Surrey last year, is the third member of his extended family to buy an Irish passport under the controversial "passports for investment" scheme. The system was abolished last April after it emerged that it was being abused by Irish politicians. Mr Getty's application was one of about ten outstanding to be processed.

His cousins, Mark Harris Getty and Christopher Ronald Getty, bought Irish passports in 1995, investing at least £2 million in Irish companies. None lives permanently in Ireland. Tara Getty will continue to live in South Africa with his wife Jessica, 26.

About 145 Irish passports have been sold to foreigners since the scheme was started by Charles Haughey, the former Prime Minister, in 1988. It generated about £90 million. But it remains unclear if all the money was invested in the Exchequer or if some was retained for politicians' private use.

A tribunal investigating payments to Mr Haughey is examining all the files on the passport scheme. A government source said the investigation was unlikely to involve the Gettys, who met all the criteria and properly invested their money in Irish companies.

REIRE TWO YEARS EARLY WITH A VIRGIN PERSONAL PENSION

Our charges are among the lowest in the industry. You'll pay no initial charges. Whatever you contribute, a charge is just 1.5%.

Pay more and you may have to wait over two years longer.

And as you might expect, no charges for early withdrawal. So if you want to consider a Virgin Personal Pension, call us today.

CALL US NOW TO FIND OUT MORE
0345 94 94 94

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8AM - 10PM
www.virgindirect.co.uk

direct

Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. The price of units and any income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invest. The basis of tax change and the tax benefit depends on personal circumstances. For your security all calls are recorded and randomly monitored. Source: Money Management, Autumn 1998.

Jury sees photos of 'road of death'



The house Mr Sawoniuk was said to have expropriated

Tim Jones reports on the second day of the war crimes trial of a retired BR ticket inspector

The Old Bailey jury in Britain's first war crimes trial were yesterday shown photographs of the East European village where Anthony Sawoniuk, now 77, was alleged to have murdered Jews for the Nazis.

The pictures included scenes of the track that became known as the "road of death" down which men, women and children were herded to their executions.

Domachevo, now in Belarus, where Mr Sawoniuk is alleged to have ordered four Jews to strip before shooting them and pushing them into open graves, has changed much since it fell to the horror of the Nazi war machine. But, as he took the jury through 40 recent photographs, John Nutting, QC, for the prosecution, identified many of the locations associated with the systematic murder of Jews.

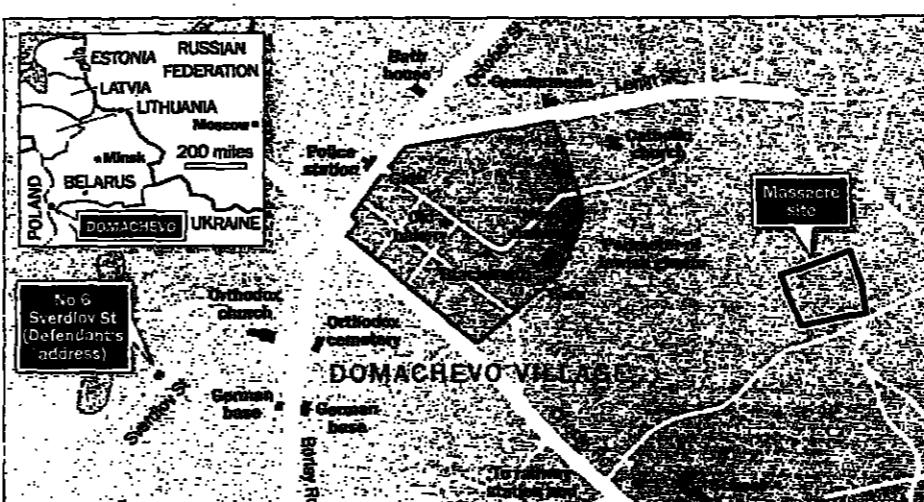
His oldest exhibit, an aerial photograph of the village taken in 1944 by the Allies.



Sawoniuk denies the charges of murder



The memorial marking the mass grave where the Jews of Domachevo were massacred; below, the "road of death" leading from the village



showed that there was little left of the ghetto area where, two years earlier, 2,900 Jews had been massacred.

Mr Nutting also produced a photograph of the wooden house, still standing, which Mr Sawoniuk was said to have had removed from the ghetto and rebuilt for his own occupation.

Mr Sawoniuk, a retired British Rail ticket collector from Bermondsey, South London, faces four charges of murder under the War Crimes Act. He sat impassively as the photographs were displayed.

As though conducting a geography class, Mr Nutting patiently led the eight men and four women jurors through bundles of maps, photographs and computer images of the scenes of the alleged crimes.

Although Mr Sawoniuk faces only four charges, the Old Bailey court has been given accounts of how he is alleged to have murdered many more, merely because they were Jews. On one occasion, he is said to have ordered about 15 weeping Jewish women, of various ages, to remove their clothes before shooting them with a sub-machine gun.

Mr Nutting was introducing the jury to the maps and photographs in order to prepare them for their trip at the weekend, when they will travel to Belarus to see the scenes of the alleged crimes.

One photograph showed the memorial stone in the sand hills marking the mass grave where the Jews were massacred. Another photograph showed the site of the old po-

lice station from where Mr Sawoniuk, in his role as a member of the police force established by the Nazis, is said to have embraced the policy of the "final solution" with enthusiasm.

Mr Nutting showed the jury a number of photographs of the area known as the sand hills. A short distance from the village, this is where the 2,900

Jews were exterminated after being driven from their ghetto in the centre of the town on being told to report for a roll call.

The prosecution alleges that the sand hills, an area of trees and shrubs, is where in the following weeks Mr Sawoniuk executed others he had flushed out of their hiding places in a search-and-kill operation. While little remains of the orig-

inal ghetto area where the Jews were kept behind barbed wire and allowed to freeze and starve during one of the worst winters in memory, the jury were shown photographs of the area as it is now to help them to follow the prosecution case.

Other pictures showed the blacksmith's shop from where witnesses claim they saw Mr

Sawoniuk lead some of the Jews to their death.

The jury was also shown shots of the Catholic church from which, on the day of the main massacre on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, on Sunday, September 20, 1942, worshippers were ordered to witness the scene being enacted outside.

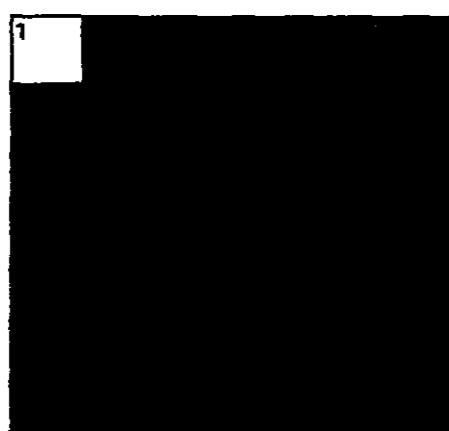
One worshipper, Galina

Puchkina, saw batches of between 50 and 70 Jews being led out of the ghetto and ordered to strip as they cried and screamed.

The Jews were then taken to the sand hills, from where Miss Puchkina and her sister heard the sounds of shooting, sub-machinegun fire and single shots.

The hearing continues.

easy@demon[no.3]



across
1 first letter of alphabet (1)

down
1 middle letter of dad (1)

what could be easier than that? getting on-line with demon of course . we've made it so easy , anyone can do it . just call us on 0800 027 9199 or scribble your name and address anywhere on this ad and send it to us at freepost demon (yes, that's all you have to write) . we'll send you our free 30-day trial cd . it doesn't get any easier than that .

Demon Internet
0800 027 9199

www.demon.net email : sales@demon.net

World Service no longer calling Germany

BY MICHAEL BINTON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE BBC German service started in 1938 to broadcast anti-Nazi messages to Germans. It is to be closed, the BBC announced yesterday.

The closure is part of a shake-up of the World Service announced by Mark Byford, the chief executive. This will also see a massive increase in funding for Internet services; put all the BBC broadcasts on the Net by 2005, the cutting of short-wave broadcasts and the expansion of FM frequencies around the world.

The German language service, which employed writers and politicians such as Thomas Mann and Richard Crossman, is now seen as something of an anachronism. The BBC says that nine out of ten Germans listening to the BBC now listen to the World Service in English.

The World Service changes have been boosted with £30 million announced under the Comprehensive Spending Review and £14 million in capital investment during the next three years.

Twelve language services will be fully multimedia in both text and audio by 2002 and all language services will be in RealAudio on the Internet by 2005.

The World Service will also expand news coverage of South Asia and Africa, the Far East and the Middle East. It will launch two continuous streams of English programming — a 24-hour *World Service News* and general programmes on *World Service Plus*. Both will be available on the Internet and satellite.

The Foreign Office grant-in-aid to the World Service will increase from £161 million this year to £175.5 million, £174 million and £177.7 million during the next three years. The additional funds represent an average increase of 3.9 per cent over the three years.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, welcomed the BBC's "energetic and imaginative" use of the money, and said he had secured for the World Service the best settlement he could.

www.abbeynational.co.uk Because life's complicated enough.

ABBEY NATIONAL

0800 731 774

Monday to Friday 8am to 9pm, or Saturday, 8am to 4pm, or drop into your local branch.

To apply for an Abbey National Bank Account or to find out more, call us

limit by up to £50.

Why we won't charge you a fee for going overdrawn or exceeding your overdraft limit.

We know it's sometimes difficult to keep track of your money, which is

you accidentally go over your agreed limit.

As accidents happen we won't charge you a fee if

Banking
Fair

THE TIMES
Avala

Many p...
Britons

50 year up...
dated with...
from client...
ances about...
after a very...
landers.

Despite the...
there has been...
bookings are...
to take advan...
now consider...
ous areas.

Man ar...
take half-cr...
Hicks said...
said: "There...
weekend will...
play closed...
ache-dampen...
ing things we...
best progress.

"We have...
from another...
are telling the...
local guidance...
and not to do...
Andrew Dunc...
director of Sk...
said: "We have...
of people calling u...
and we have...
self from skinne...
all."

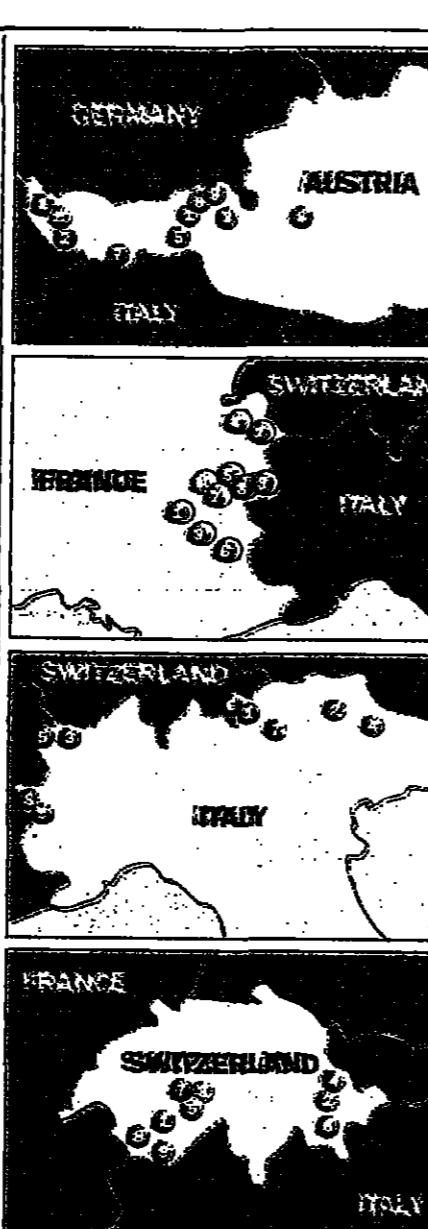
Port accus...
selling its...
to the Spa...

ADON-GREAT fishing...
has been accused of...
as part by allowing s...
fishermen to buy into...
producers' organisations...
The partners, the Corri...
and the Lle...
founded by fishermen in...
Rywood, where the...
fished with 6,000 a...
century ago, has been...
of Fishermen's Organis...
the marriage of c...
one with traditional m...
part of the deal, the s...
promised to take a...
the part of their catch in...

Avalanches fail to deter skiers



THE RESORTS, CONDITIONS AND TRAVELLING



REPORT	Snow	Avalanche?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1 Alpbach	Very good	X	✓	✓	✓	Badgastein	Munich, Innsbruck
2 Ischgl	Very good		✓	X	✓	Landdeck	Innsbruck
3 Kitzbühel	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Satzenberg	Munich, Zurich
4 Lech	Very good		✓	X	✓	Langen	Innsbruck, Salzburg
5 Mayrhofen	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Jenbach	Munich, Innsbruck
6 Niederau	Excellent	X	✓	✓	✓	Wörthersee	Innsbruck, Salzburg
7 Obergurgl	Heavy		✓	✓	✓	Oetztal	Innsbruck, Salzburg
8 Schladming	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Kufstein	Munich, Salzburg, Innsbruck
9 St Anton	Very good		✓	✓	✓	In resort	Innsbruck, Zurich, Munich

REPORT	Snow	Avalanche?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1 Alpe d'Huez	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Grenoble	Lyon, Grenoble
2 Chamonix	Very good		X	✓	X	In resort	Geneva
3 Dents du Midi	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Grenoble	Grenoble, Lyons
4 Flaine	Limited		✓	✓	✓	Clermont	Geneva
5 La Plagne	Very good	X	✓	✓	✓	Aosta	Yverdon, Turin, Grenoble
6 S. Chérelles	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Brienz	Geneva, Chambéry
7 Three Valleys	Very good		✓	✓	✓	Modane	Geneva, Chambéry
8 Tignes	Heavy		X	✓	✓	Bourg	Geneva, Chambéry
9 Val d'Isère	Heavy		X	✓	✓	Bourg	Geneva, Lyons
10 Valmorel	Very good		✓	✓	✓	In resort	Geneva, Lyons

REPORT	Snow	Avalanche?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1 Bormio	Fair		✓	✓	✓	Trento	Milan, Bergamo
2 Canazei	Fair	X	✓	✓	✓	In resort	Milan
3 Cervinia	Heavy		X	✓	✓	Châtillon	Turin, Geneva
4 Cortina	Ice hard	X	X	✓	✓	Cortina	Venice
5 Courmayeur	Heavy	X	✓	✓	✓	Pièrre-Saint-Denis	Turin, Geneva
6 Livigno	Good		✓	✓	✓	Trento	Milan, Zurich, Bergamo
7 Madonna di Campiglio	Good		✓	✓	✓	In resort	Verona, Milan
8 Saosse d'Ost	New		✓	✓	✓	Ost	Turin
9 Sestriere	Fair	X	✓	✓	✓	Ost	Turin
10 Bardonecchia	Fair	X	✓	✓	✓	In resort	Turin

REPORT	Snow	Avalanche?	Lifts	Roads	Rail	Station	Airport
1 Crans	Very good		X	✓	✓	In resort	Sion, Geneva, Zurich
2 Davos	Very good		X	✓	✓	Davos Dorf	Zurich
3 Grindelwald	Limited		X	✓	✓	In resort	Zurich
4 Klosters	Very good		X	✓	✓	Klosters	Zurich, Geneva
5 Mürren	Limited		X	✓	✓	In resort	Zurich
6 St. Moritz	Very good		✓	✓	✓	In resort	Zurich
7 Wengen	Very good		X	✓	✓	Le Châble	Geneva
8 Zermatt	New		X	✓	✓	In resort	Geneva
9 Leyrin	Very good	X	✓	✓	✓	In resort	Zurich, Geneva

Many pistes closed but Britons still flying in

BY JOANNA BALE

SKI tour operators were inundated with calls yesterday from clients seeking reassurances about safety in the Alps after a series of deaths in avalanches.

Despite the risks, however, there has been an upsurge in bookings from people hoping to take advantage of excellent snow conditions once dangerous areas have been cleared.

Many are parents aiming to take their children skiing over half-term next week. Lawrence A Hicks, sales and public relations manager for Inghams, said: "Those going out this weekend will find a lot of pistes closed because of avalanche dangers, but we are hoping things will improve as the week progresses."

"We have had lots of calls from anxious people and we are telling them to observe local guidelines, ski in groups and not to ski off-piste."

Andrew Dunn, managing director of Ski Scott Dunn, said: "We have had hundreds of people calling us for guidance. We have banned all our staff from skiing off-piste and

have put out memos to guests advising them not to ski off-piste, and certainly not without a guide."

He added: "With all this snow, we are on for a brilliant end-of-season, so there has been a great deal of interest and I expect to fill everything from February 20 onwards."

In Austria, the army air-lifted supplies to about 25,000 tourists stranded in Lech and St Anton after snow blocked roads. Although many resorts, such as Chamonix, were closed yesterday because of a high risk of avalanches, work was under way to clear unstable snow using explosives.

Jean-Claude Foudot, of Ski Weekend, which specialises in short breaks and tailor-made holidays, said: "Once everything is cleared, the skiing will be fantastic. Even though there are problems in Chamonix at the moment we are still advising people to go because things will be sorted out very quickly."

Laura Zachary, of the Ski Club of Great Britain, said it had been inundated with calls.

Port accused of selling its soul to the Spanish

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A ONCE-GREAT fishing port has been accused of "selling its soul" by allowing 34 Spanish boats to buy into its fish producers' organisation.

The partnership between La Coruña and Fleetwood, Lancashire, has been condemned by fishermen around Britain as "sleeping with the enemy".

Fleetwood, where 700 work in the fishing industry compared with 6,000 a quarter of a century ago, has been forced out of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations. But skippers in the port insist the marriage of convenience with traditional maritime rivals is necessary to save the port from oblivion.

As part of the deal, the Spanish promised to land a sizeable part of their catch in

Ruinous end to row over land strip

BY JOHN ASTON

A DISPUTE between neighbours over a small strip of land worth £200 ended yesterday with a couple facing the prospect of selling their Cotswolds retirement home to pay a huge legal bill. The ruinous row over where the boundary lay lasted 18 years.

It was a disastrous end for George Powling, 80, and his wife Elizabeth, 76, when the Court of Appeal ruled for Douglas Woolls, 78. It means that the couple must leave their five-bedroom house at Brinscombe, Gloucestershire.

Mrs Powling said: "It has been more than a nightmare — if that is possible. We will definitely have to sell the house to pay the court costs. "It is all over a tiny piece of land which was only worth £200 when we first had trouble. It is crazy, I can tell you. Our life savings are already gone. Now we shall have to find up to another £100,000 by the time we have finished paying court costs."

The court yesterday allowed an appeal by Mr Woolls and overturned a Gloucester County Court ruling in April 1997 that the Powlings owned the disputed 12ft-by-60ft strip by an old orchard drystone wall. While Mr Woolls was entitled only to £2 damages for trespass, the Powlings must pay 75 per cent of legal costs and Mr Woolls the remainder. — PA News



Fleetwood hopes the Spanish can help revive its economy

Mother wins hearing on Scots Guards

BY AUDREY MAGEE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE mother of a teenager shot dead by two Scots Guards in Belfast yesterday won the first stage of a legal bid to have the soldiers thrown out of the Army.

Jean McBride, whose 18-year-old son, Peter, was shot in the back by James Fisher and Mark Wright in 1992 received permission to apply for a judicial review of the Ministry of Defence's decision to allow them to remain in the Army.

Granting permission in the Belfast High Court, Mr Justice Kerr warned Mrs McBride that she was facing "a very difficult case".

Fisher and Wright were released on licence last year after serving six years for murdering McBride. They said that they believed he had a coffee jar bomb, but evidence emerged during the trial showing that he had not. The pair were released after a campaign by supporters including the independent MP Martin Bell, and allowed to return to their Army regiments.

Mrs McBride said that she was delighted with yesterday's decision. "Peter's death isn't getting any easier after almost seven years. But if I get my day in court I'll be happy," she said.

Paul O'Connor, solicitor

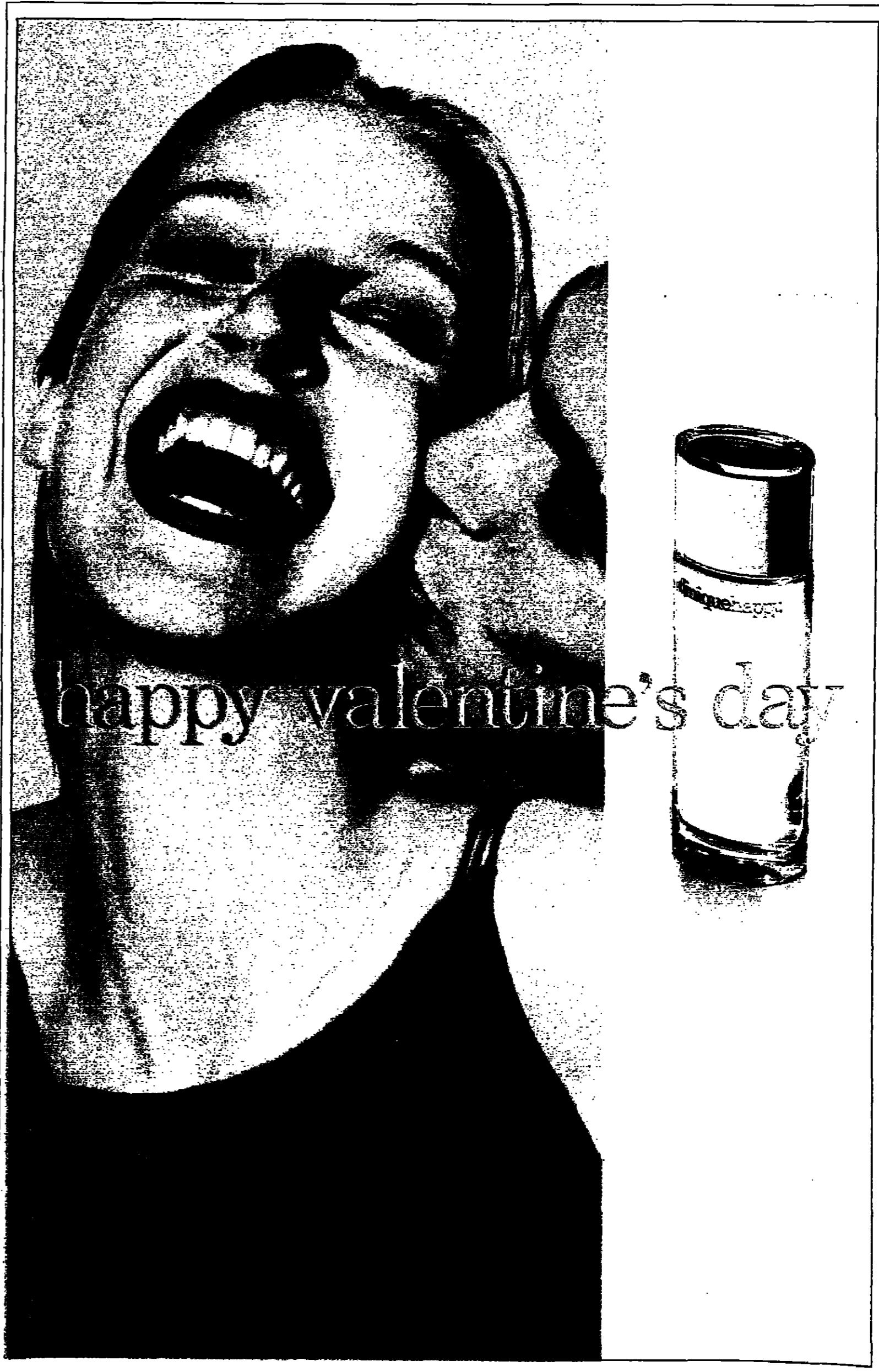
for the McBride family, said: "We want these soldiers dismissed from the Army and the Government to accept that the judgment of the court when they were convicted of murder is the right one and that a small group of people within the armed forces does not have the right to go against that."

It is the first time that such an application has been granted against the MoD, which intends to challenge the move.

Under Queen's Regulations, members of the Armed Forces convicted of murder and other custodial offences must be dismissed unless the Army Board finds that exceptional circumstances exist.



Mrs McBride: wants the soldiers sacked



Hospital kept hearts of 170 dead children

THE hearts of more than 170 children who died after surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary were removed and kept for "educational purposes" without their parents' consent, it was disclosed yesterday.

Many of the children died as a result of a series of operations that led to three surgeons being found guilty of serious professional misconduct. The news that they were buried without their hearts has horrified their families.

The Bristol Children's Heart Action Group said yesterday that between 170 and 300 children's hearts had been retained after operations in the hospital over the 12 years to 1995. The hearts and other organs were preserved in formaldehyde without the knowledge of parents after autopsies.

The United Bristol Children's Care NHS Trust yesterday confirmed that organs were retained for "further examination, education or audit purposes". The trust said that it was standard practice in hospitals to retain organs without consent of the next of kin. However, it admitted this procedure appeared outdated and

Parents were not told of organ removal at the Bristol Infirmary, reports Simon de Bruxelles

the parental consent given for post-mortem examinations to be carried out on the children "was not as informed as modern standards require".

Michaela Willis, the chairwoman of the action group, said: "It was known that hearts had been retained without knowledge or consent in isolated cases, but the trust had not made us aware until now that hearts had been retained systematically. The shock and sorrow that this disclosure will cause to parents... is incalculable."

Mrs Willis said that the infirmary would write to each of the parents whose child's heart had been kept within the next few days. Those whose child's heart or tissue had not

been retained would be given a personal written assurance of the fact.

Helen Rickard, whose daughter, Samantha, died in 1993 after an operation at the hospital by James Wisheart, who was struck off after the inquiry by the General Medical Council, discovered her daughter's heart had been retained after looking through medical records. "I was absolutely devastated. I thought I had buried my daughter after the operation, but then discovered she was not laid completely to rest," she said.

"If I had known that Samantha's heart had been taken out I would have insisted that it was put back in before she was buried. I am absolutely certain that at no stage was I asked for permission to use her heart for teaching or research."

The trust said yesterday that it had been contacting parents during the past few months to tell them that it had kept their children's hearts after operations between 1976 and 1995, and to ask what they wanted done with them.

Kate Birch, a spokeswoman for the trust, said: "The retention of body tissue for examina-

tion, education and audit purposes has always been standard practice."

The majority of post-mortems are undertaken at the request of the coroner. All other post-mortems were undertaken with the consent of families, but it is accepted that this consent was not as informed as modern standards require."

Nick Harvey, the Liberal Democrat MP for North Devon, said that he would table a question in the House of Commons about the retention of organs without consent, and that he wanted Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, to review the law on the matter.

"This is a disgrace that turns my stomach," Mr Harvey said. "The parents didn't even know this practice was go-

Head of inquiry accused of bias

BY MARTHA LINDEN

THE president of the doctors' disciplinary body was accused of bias at the opening of an appeal yesterday by one of the men struck off over heart surgery on babies.

St Donald Irvine, president of the General Medical Council, was accused of failing to disclose that his grandchild was being treated for heart condition during last year's inquiry by the council into 53 heart operations on children at the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

The inquiry, of which Sir Donald was chairman, lasted seven months and was the longest and most complex it had undertaken.

John Roylance, the chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust, was ordered to be struck off the medical register. He and surgeon James Wisheart and Janardan Dharmam were found guilty of serious professional misconduct.

Opening an appeal before the judicial committee of the Privy Council on behalf of Dr Raynner Robert

Francis, QC, said that Sir Donald had "clear emotional links" with the parents in the heart babies' cases. "We would submit that there is at least an appearance of clear emotional links between the circumstances in relation to his own family and those of the other parents in these cases," he told the hearing.

Mr Francis said that the complaints about Dr Roylance all related to his actions as a manager and not as a doctor. The hearing continues. (PA News)



Irvine: grandson had a heart condition



Michaela Willis: "The shock and sorrow that this will cause parents is incalculable"

ing on. The tragic story of babies' deaths at the infirmary just gets worse and worse. It's extremely upsetting for the parents of babies who died."

The disclosure comes six weeks before the opening of the public inquiry into the

deaths of 29 babies after heart surgery at the infirmary. Four other children were left brain damaged after operations at the hospital. The Bristol Children's Heart Action Group claims that many more children died,

Parents force inquiry into meningitis

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES, WEST OF ENGLAND CORRESPONDENT

AN OFFICIAL inquiry was ordered yesterday into the handling of the meningitis outbreak in South Wales, which has killed three people.

Jon Owen Jones, the Welsh Office Health Minister, bowed to pressure from parents concerned about the spread of the disease, which has struck 11 people in the town of Pontypridd.

Mr Jones said he was asking a hastily convened study group to report as soon as possible. He said that Ruth Hall, the Chief Medical Officer of Wales, would nominate individuals with appropriate experience and knowledge.

The National Meningitis Trust and the Meningitis Research Foundation will be asked to join the group, which will be chaired by Professor Ian Cameron, Provost and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales College of Medicine.

There have been 56 cases of meningitis in Wales so far this year compared with 32 in the whole of 1998.

The move follows concern over the delay in giving medical treatment to pupils at Cadoxton Comprehensive School in Pontypridd. Vaccinations were not given until nine days after the death of Gareth Gould, 15.

Parents claim that the delay may have allowed seven other children to develop the illness and put others at risk. Medical

experts contend that as the vast majority of cases of meningitis are isolated instances, it would be wrong simply to dispense powerful antibiotics to everyone with whom they might have come into contact.

More than 1,700 pupils staff at three schools attended by the victims of the Pontypridd outbreak have been vaccinated during the past few days. But parents of pupils at the Cardinal Newman Comprehensive are angry that their children have not been offered treatment after the death of a popular home economics teacher.

Fewer than half the school's 688 pupils turned up for lessons yesterday after the death of Lynne James, 55.

The Bro-Taf health authority says it has been unable to find any link between Mrs James' illness and the victims from other schools in the area, and that it is treating it as an "isolated" infection.

But yesterday it was disclosed that Joyce Davies, 66, the first fatality of the outbreak, has grandchildren at the school where Mrs James taught. She lived half a mile from the Cardinal Newman school.

Doctors treating Stuart McLean, 16, the most seriously victim of the meningitis outbreak, said yesterday that his condition had greatly improved.

Pupils taught to play by the book

BY HANNAH BETTS

FATHERS and grandfathers backed by three Saracens rugby players set out this week to convince the boys of a Herefordshire school that reading is not for sissies.

Boys and girls at Fleetville Infant School, St Albans, listened attentively as 50 fathers and grandfathers told stories to small groups of children.

After lunch it was the turn of the track-suited rugby players, who showed that macho men can be as keen on reading as they are on sport. Brendon Reidy, who became a father two weeks ago, said that he was looking forward to reading to his son, Lewis. "Reading opens up a whole world of adventure and it's essential that we encourage boys to become a part of that."

Peter Freeman, a parent and one of the organisers of the school reading day, turned up in his karate outfit for the event. Explaining its purpose, he said: "We all know what it's like. You come home at 7.30 in the evening and the last thing you want to do is sit down with a book. But if we don't encourage children to read now they'll never pick it up in their future lives. I want them to be able to say: 'Look there's a bloke who's six foot and who's a sportsman. If he likes reading then it must be all right.'

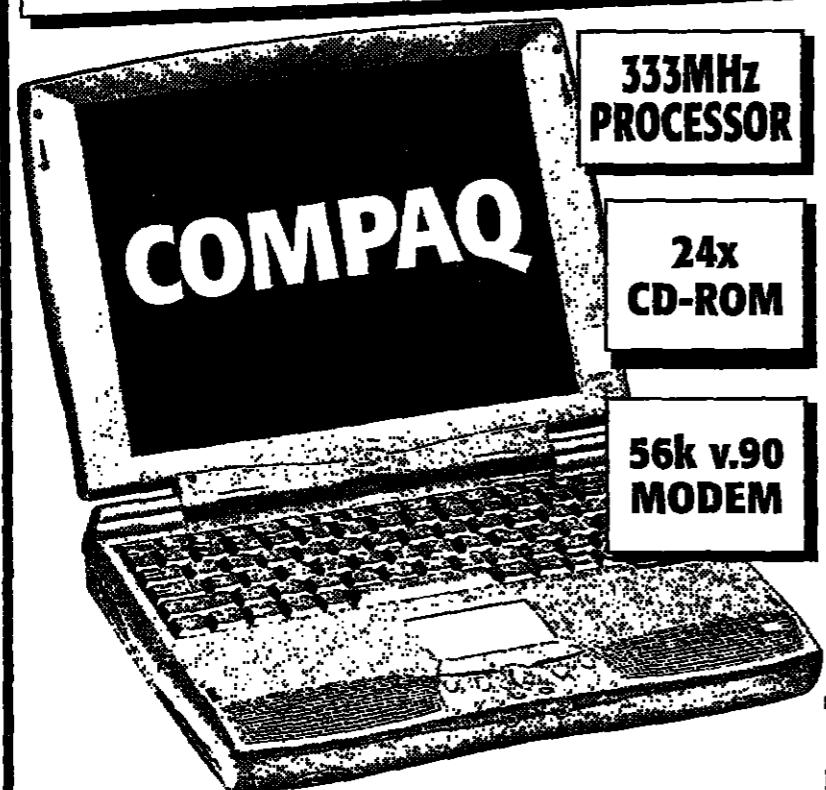
Anita Tuilberg, the head teacher, said: "Research has shown that where there are difficulties boys tend to turn off reading around the age of seven. Our goal is to build an avid generation of readers from which no child is excluded."

□ Call The Times 0171-895-9018 (office hours only) and let us know about your token-raising ideas for the Free Books For Schools scheme.

Token, page 33

New Range of Laptop PCs

AVAILABLE NOW AT PC WORLD



333MHz Processor

24x CD-ROM

56k v.90 Modem

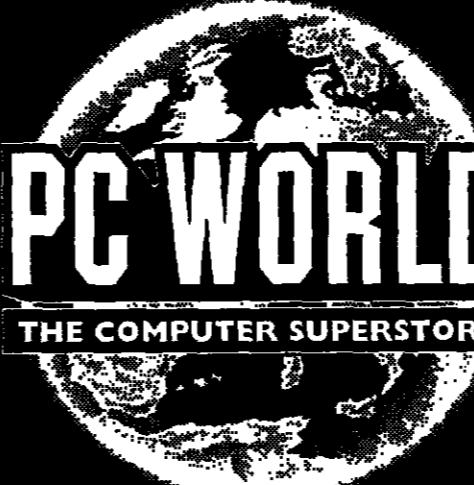
**COMPAQ
333MHz AMD K6-2 Processor**

- 32Mb SDRAM
- 3.2Gb Hard Disk
- 512k L2 Cache Memory
- 12.1" HPA Colour Display
- 24x CD-ROM
- 56k v.90 Modem
- Windows 98
- 2Mb Integrated Video Memory

MODEL: Presario 1255

**NEW
PC WORLD PRICE
£1299**

OR £38.40 per month* INC VAT



SONY 266MHz Intel Pentium Processor with MMX Technology



PC WORLD PRICE
£999

INC VAT £38.40 per month*

TOSHIBA 300MHz AMD K6-2 Processor



PC WORLD PRICE
£1299

INC VAT £38.40 per month*

COMPAQ 333MHz AMD K6-2 Processor



PC WORLD PRICE
£1499

INC VAT £44.31 per month*

TOSHIBA 300MHz AMD K6-2 Processor

- 64Mb RAM
- 4.0Gb Hard Disk
- 512k Cache Memory
- 12.1" TFT Colour Display
- 24x CD-ROM
- 56k v.90 Modem
- Windows 98
- MS Works 97
- MODEL: Satellite 2520 CDT

**NEW
PC WORLD PRICE
£1499**

OR £44.31 per month* INC VAT

300MHz Processor

64Mb RAM

12.1" TFT Colour Display

PC WORLD

THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

FOR YOUR NEAREST STORE CALL 0990 464 464

*On all PCs and printers over £250. Credit Protection Insurance (CPI) is optional and will protect your payments in case of accidents, unemployment or illness. CPI is not included in the monthly repayments unless otherwise stated. TYPICAL EXAMPLE:
£1000 CPI Case Price £999. No Deposit and 48 monthly payments of £20.66 - total amount payable £991.88. Minimum purchase £250. Subject to status. Written quotations available from Dept MR, PCW, Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead HP2 2TG.

The Intel Inside logo, Pentium, Celeron and MMX are Registered Trademarks of the Intel Corporation

© 1999 PC World Ltd

THE TIMES



I never pick it up in their future lives. I want them to be able to say: "Look there's a bloke who's six foot and who's a sportsman. If he likes reading then it must be all right." Anita Tuilberg, the head teacher, said: "Research has shown that where there are difficulties boys tend to turn off reading around the age of seven. Our goal is to build an avid generation of readers from which no child is excluded."

□ Call The Times 0171-895-9018 (office hours only) and let us know about your token-raising ideas for the Free Books For Schools scheme.

Token, page 33

Energy firms defeated over pension raid

TWO pensioners who accused the electricity industry of raiding their pension funds have won a legal battle to recover £2 billion. The ruling is expected to benefit 200,000 pensioners.

The Court of Appeal yesterday held that National Grid had acted unlawfully in taking £40.3 million in surpluses from the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme in 1992 to pay for voluntary redundancies. A similar ruling was made against National Power.

The case affects the 21 companies in the electricity supply industry and is expected to have implications for other company pension schemes. Many have generated far more money than needed to pay pensioners because investments have done so well.

Traditional "defined benefit" schemes — which pay pensioners about two thirds of final salary — are most likely to be affected. Because of its significance, the case is likely to be appealed to the House of Lords, the court was told.

The two pensioners who brought the case, David Laws, 61, and Reg Mayes, 75, former National Grid workers, criticised the employers' attempt to "drag the process out further" by appeal. They demanded that repayments be made to the funds immediately.

"We are pensioners and we want our money now," Mr Laws said. "The average widow's pension is twenty quid — these people are dying in poverty every year, we can't wait another two years or more while they go to the Lords."

The two men have been trying for six years to have the money returned. They went first to the Pensions Ombuds-

**Gavin Lumsden
and Christine
Middap on the
implications of
£2bn victory by
retired workers**

man, who upheld their case, but the decision was overturned on appeal to the High Court in June 1997.

The pensioners then went to the Court of Appeal, which yesterday ruled that there was no provision in the scheme giving employers unilateral power to forfeit their liabilities to pay contributions.

Lords Justices Nourse, Schiemann and Brooke said that an employer owed an implied obligation of good faith to his employees. "This means that he must not, without reasonable and proper cause, conduct himself in a manner calculated or likely to destroy or seriously damage the relationship of confidence and trust between employer and employee." That obligation included a pension scheme.

The companies had argued that they could correct past overfunding by not paying contributions that had been shown not to be needed.

National Grid said after the case that it was examining the judgment. It would not be known until a court hearing in two months' time how much it would have to repay, and in the meantime it was considering whether to appeal.

Both power companies are confident that they will be able

to change the rules of the pension schemes to let them benefit from the surplus money retrospectively.

The pensioners' solicitor, Peter Woods of Stephens Innocent, said that despite the threat of an appeal to the Lords, the decision was a "tremendous victory" which promised to lead to increased benefits. The case could have implications for other such funds. "The whole pensions industry is watching this case."

But Dougie Rooney of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, which has 30,000 members in the power industry, said: "This is a disastrous decision.

"It could encourage companies throughout industry to replace occupational schemes with 'money purchase' schemes which leave people worse off."



David Laws celebrating the appeal court decision yesterday after he and Reg Mayes had fought a six-year campaign

BA woman withdraws revenge accusation

By ADRIAN LEE

A BRITISH Airways manager who claimed that her sacking was motivated by revenge for an office affair withdrew the allegation yesterday.

Joanne Stansfield, 30, of Windsor, Berkshire, had alleged that her "intimate liaison" with Pat Galle, a BA executive and the boyfriend of Miss Walker, played a crucial role.

But on the fifth day of an employment tribunal, a lawyer for Miss Stansfield conceded that she could not prove that Miss Walker knew of the relationship when the decision was made.

Miss Stansfield claims she suffered sexual discrimination when she was sacked after a row over overtime while a senior male colleague was given a verbal warning. She was later reinstated at a lower grade.

The tribunal in Croydon, South London, has reserved judgment.

Church upset by voodoo for lovers

By PETER GLEESON

THE Church of England has criticised a men's fragrance company for hiring a "witch doctor" to cast a spell over its latest product range.

The voodoo doctor Bishop Lewis will today bless £2 million worth of Lynx's new fragrance, Voodoo, at a dusk ceremony at the company's Leeds headquarters, but a church official described the move as a dangerous publicity stunt.

A spokesman for the Bishop of Ripon, the Right Rev David Young, said: "In general, the Church is concerned that any dabbling with the occult or psychic forces, however bogus, can be disturbing and dangerous. We warn strongly against irresponsible activity of this nature."

Mr Lewis, who was born in Brazil and lives in London, reads shells to "divine the unknown". He said his "come to me" spell using candlelight, mirrors, flowers and soft music will make users of the new fragrance more attractive, virile and better lovers.

He added: "This is not black magic. People criticise black magic, which is about negative prophecies of intent. I deal with positives."

A Lynx spokeswoman said that he was not being paid a great deal of money. "He felt that if he asked for a great deal of money, the spirits would be angry and look upon that as being exploitative."

Scientists figure out share madness

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

AS INVESTORS always suspected, the stock market is not the haven of rational analysis that fund managers like to claim. Its wild fluctuations are fuelled by traders who base their investment decisions not on companies' performance but on the behaviour of the market itself.

By looking for price trends and patterns, they help to create a herd instinct which increases the divergences of the market above and below the value it would have in a wholly rational environment.

Thomas Lux, an economist from Bonn University, and Michele Marchesi, an electrical engineer from Cagliari University, applied the methods of statistical physics.

They find that the market's behaviour can be simulated by assuming there are two kinds of players: "fundamentalists", who analyse shares by the underlying performance of a company, and "noise traders", who follow trends.

The two men created a mathematical model in which noise traders can swing between optimism and pessimism. They report in *Nature* that the model predicts a share price which in the long term is close to the valuation fundamentalists would settle on. But the model can shift abruptly to turbulent behaviour with volatile prices.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A REASON TO BUY AN ALFA 145, HERE'S 4.

Not that you need them. The Alfa 145 1.6 Junior has been described as one of the most distinctive 3 door hatchbacks on the road. With its unique 120 bhp, Twin Spark 16V engine, you'll find it's more powerful and efficient than ever.

It's also more attractive, with 15" alloy wheels, electric windows and door mirrors, leather steering wheel and gear knob, remote central locking, front fog lights, 6 speaker

**3 YEARS'
DEALER
WARRANTY**

**2 YEARS'
FREE
SERVICING**

**1 YEAR'S
FREE
INSURANCE**

£14,495*

AVAILABLE ONLY UNTIL
MARCH 31ST 1999

radio cassette, alarm and immobiliser.

It's a car whose looks and performance are only matched by its safety features, which include ABS, driver's airbag and side impact bars. All this for just £14,495* and you're left with far more than 4 reasons to buy an Alfa 145. In fact there's more than enough reasons to take one for a test drive. To organise one, simply call 0800 718000 for your nearest dealer.

Contact Lenses Delivered Direct At discount prices

direct lenses
The contact lens replacement company

0171 350 1234

Call for an information pack now. Please quote reference TGL1

Order on line for even greater savings

www.directlenses.com



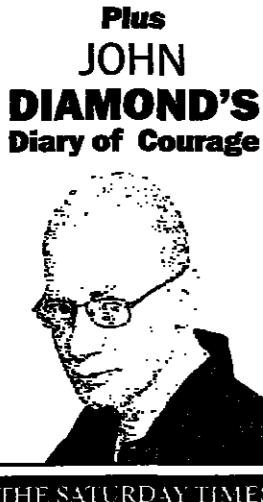
SUPER
MOTORMO

Saturday in
the times

Meet
NICKY
CLARKE
Celebrity
hairdresser



Meet
JOHN
LE CARRE
and start
reading his
new thriller



Plus
JOHN
DIAMOND'S
Diary of Courage

THE SATURDAY TIMES
Only 60p

Bodice rippers make way for new romantics

A FORMER marriage guidance counsellor who was yesterday shortlisted for the Romantic Novelist of the Year award said that some of her clients' tales were too unbelievable even for her genre.

"Fact is more bizarre than fiction," said Helene Wiggin, who was nominated for *In the Heart of the Garden*, a story tracing the history of the millennium through an English country garden and the women who tend it. "There were many stories that you couldn't have put in a book."

Wiggin, who lives in a caravan with her husband and four children in the Yorkshire Dales, spent 12 years as a marriage counsellor. As real-life love is now less bound by convention than it was in the past, she believes that the romance genre is one that should continue to evolve. For her, such novels do not need to end at the altar but depend entirely on "the power of true relationships".

Ms Wiggin, who has also worked as a literacy tutor, said that she had written poems and stories as a child but that an English degree at Leeds had stifled her creativity. Her inspiration returned only years after she graduated.

Other candidates for the

Those shortlisted
for the genre's
biggest honour
prefer love less
formulaic, writes
Dalya Alberge

award, which will be presented on April 21, include Jessica Stirling (Hugh C. Rae's *nom de plume*), and Zoe Fairbairns, for a book she published after eight years of writer's block.

Ms Fairbairns, who believes that her writer's block was brought on by the exhaustion of writing several books in the 1970s and 1980s, today works as a subtitler for television programmes for the deaf. She was picked for *Other Names*, a story set against the world of a "dangerously charming" insurance man who changes the lives of two women.

"I've never ended a book with wedding bells," she said, denying any suggestion that romance has its limits.

People might not think the insurance industry was a romantic subject, she said, "but

people in insurance have romances".

Hugh C. Rae, 63, took on a woman's name after switching from crime writing to romance. He has been shortlisted for *The Wind from the Hills*, an epic tale of love, greed and betrayal set on the remote Scottish Isle of Mull. Yesterday he said that there was plenty of "sin and suffering" in his books.

The Romantic Novelists' Association says that between 8 and 10 per cent of adults buy at least one romance novel each year, making it the second most popular fiction genre after crime. Most romance readers are women.

The association's research found that "modern women demand modern novels and wedding bells are no longer a prerequisite for a good romantic read".

Angela Arney, chairman of the association, said: "We have come a long way from the point when all romantic fiction involved a swooning virgin and a tall, dark, handsome stranger. Our shortlist this year captures the essence of love in all its contexts. The heroines range from a successful childless thirtysomething to a betrayed widow."

The other writers shortlisted



Hugh C. Rae, Zoe Fairbairns, Elain Duffy, Maeve Haran (seated), Victoria Clayton (standing), Clare Chambers, Catherine Jones and Helene Wiggin have been shortlisted for the Romantic Novelist of the Year award

WORDS FROM THE HEART

HELENE WIGGIN in her 50s, married with four children. Graduated from Leeds University to become a teacher. Worked as a literacy tutor, market trader, cafe proprietor and health worker.

In the Heart of the Garden

Something in the night awoke him through the year arch up the steps to the middle house, some winged spirit engine him onwards to the very place where life heart had been stirred. White flowers bloom waved blue ghosts. 9

CATHERINE JONES: 43, was in the Army for eight years. Has written one previous novel and a non-fiction guide to being an army wife.

Edwina

Predictably, Lizzie was horrified by such a suggestion. "Edwina, how could you? He's a married man!"

"So? I really can't believe that you are so naive as to think that a wedding ring has ever stopped a man from having sex with someone other than his wife. Why don't you ask Simon?

He's bound to know." 9

ZOE FAIRBAIRNS: 52, studied at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Established a highly successful writing career in the 70s and 80s, then experienced writer's block until now.

Other Names

He was in his mid-twenties. He wore striped pyjamas under a rather clausely black-quilted dressing gown, and he, had fallen over his breakfast. In so doing, he had managed to plance the foil top of the yogurt pot with his big toe. 9

VICTORIA CLAYTON: 52, read English at Cambridge, her writing talent was revealed when she had two children's novels published when in her early twenties. Has written two novels.

Past Mischiefs

I had been standing in the pigeon tower when Jack shot himself. It's the most perfect little octagonal building, two storeys high and fifteenth-century, like our house. I don't suppose I'll ever feel quite the same about it, now. It was a bright October day, with a strong suspicion of chill in the breeze and high, thin clouds. 9

JESSICA STIRLING: 63, was born in Glasgow, and now lives on the edge of the city. Has enjoyed a successful career as a writer. Jessica Stirling's real name is Hugh C. Rae, and she is married and has one daughter who lives in France.

The Wind from the Hills

He rolled on to his elbow and looked down at her. He still wore his lined tweed waistcoat and flannel shirt, the collar jutting out behind his ear. His face was streak with perspiration and he smelt, Biddy thought, faintly fishy as if he had been too close to the Delirada's kipper boxes. 9

MAEVE HARAN: 48, studied law at Oxford then worked as a journalist. Has three children, and has written five novels.

All That She Wants

When Henrietta eventually found the perfect man for her friend Fran, she was at a distinct disadvantage. Anyone else bring flat on their back with their feet, in the airups and their wings facing due south with a posse of medical students staring up it might have tried to think of other things. 9

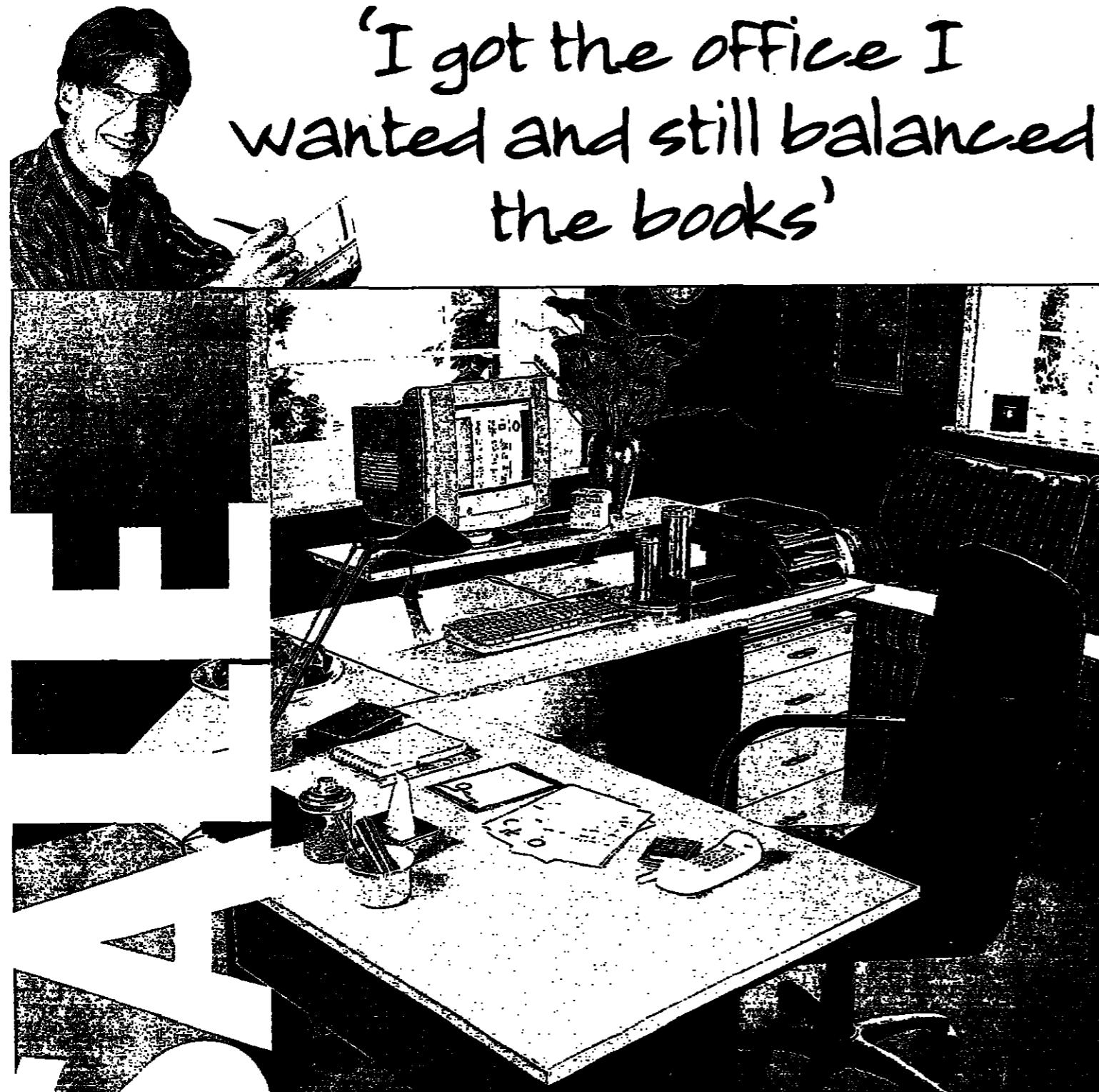
ELAIN DUFFY: 32, has worked in the tourist industry, as an advertising executive and as a market research consultant.

Proud Heart, Fair Lady

Suddenly he dropped to one knee pressing her hand to his heart. "I offer you this heart a little battered and unaccustomed to use, but for what it's worth, it will be true and will love you to the end of time and beyond." Kathryn thought she should pinch herself in case she was dreaming, but she didn't, as this was a dream she wanted to continue for the rest of her life.

Learning to Swim

Marcus Radley. Had rehearsed this meeting a thousand times in my mind, but in spite of all this preparation failed to deliver any of the brilliant and devastating lines I'd practised over the years. Instead I said 'Hello Marcus,' putting the faintest emphasis on his name and evocative its strangeness. 9



50%
OFF
OFFICE FURNITURE

UNDER

MIC2101
HALF
PRICE

£349

MICHIGAN PACKAGE

WAS £719
SAVE £370

THIS MICHIGAN OFFICE PACKAGE
IN PEARWOOD STYLE COMPRISES:
Managers Leather Faced Chic Monitor
Shelf, 4 Drawer Pedestal, Corner Return,
1500 Desk and 1225 Desk.

You'll love the change

MFI homeworks

SHOPPING HOURS: Sun 11-5, Mon 10-8, Tues, Wed, Thurs 10-6, Fri 10-8, Sat 9-6

N. Ireland Exceptions: Sun 1-6, Mon 10-6, Wed to Fri 10-9.

PRICE INFORMATION: Prices are for self-assembly units and exclude ornaments, accessories etc. Some items may not be available in all stores.

All items subject to availability. Subject to terms and conditions of delivery. See website for details.

Baltic Explorer

12 Nights - Tuesday 15th - Sunday 27th June 1999

HARWICH ~ NORWAY ~ DENMARK ~ SWEDEN
FINLAND ~ RUSSIA ~ ESTONIA ~ GERMANY ~ HARWICH

Day 1. Depart Harwich at 4.00pm.

Day 2. A day to relax and enjoy the pleasures of life at sea.

Day 3. Oslo, Norway. Discover Norway's Viking legacy and illustrious seafaring traditions.

Day 4. Arrive in Copenhagen, Denmark in the early afternoon

and enjoy a choice of tours

either taking in the rich history

and traditions of the capital city

or travelling north to visit the impressive Frederiksborg Castle.

The evening is free to enjoy

the lively atmosphere of Tivoli Gardens, before sailing at

2 o'clock in the morning.

Day 5. After your early morning

departure from Copenhagen, a

day at sea to admire the stunning

Baltic scenery.

Day 6. A full day in Stockholm,

Sweden. Discover the unique

nature of Stockholm's island

geography on a leisurely cruise

of the city's sparkling waterways.

Day 7. Helsinki, Finland.

enjoy an afternoon panoramic

tour as your introduction to the

charming style of the 'white

city of the north.'

Day 8. St Petersburg, Russia.

Built by Peter the Great in the

Baltic.

Day 11. Warnemünde,

Germany. A full day to Berlin,

a city in transition. See the

highlights of Germany's cultural

capital including the remains of

the historic Berlin Wall.

Day 12. A morning transit of

the Kiel Canal, linking the Baltic

to the North Sea.

Day 13. We arrive back in

Harwich at 10.30am.

Late 17th century, Russia's second largest city is renowned for its breathtaking architecture and museums.

Day 9. Tallinn, Estonia. Stroll along the cobblestone streets of this ancient Hanseatic city and admire the wealth of historical and architectural monuments.

Day 10. St. Petersburg, Russia. Built by Peter the Great in the

Baltic.

Day 11. Warnemünde, Germany. A full day to Berlin,

a city in transition. See the

highlights of Germany's cultural

capital including the remains of

the historic Berlin Wall.

Day 12. A morning transit of

the Kiel Canal, linking the Baltic

to the North Sea.

Day 13. We arrive back in

Harwich at 10.30am.

LOOK WHAT'S INCLUDED...

Fees from just £1245 per person include:

- Choice of excursions in every port
- All gratuities on board
- Complimentary wine with evening meals
- Return transport to Harwich or free parking
- All port taxes

Also available 13 night Baltic Discovery from Leith, 7 night Northern Delights & 11 night Eclipse cruise from Harwich. Fascinating 12 night itineraries between Harwich and Athens.

CRUISING IN COMFORT & STYLE

• Fine ship, noted for her gracious lines, spacious

cabins and friendly atmosphere.

• Exclusively chartered for British passengers

• Maximum of 390 fellow guests

• Informative talks on ports of call

For further details call us now: 24 hour brochureline

01293 433041

Premiere House, Betts Way, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2GB. Tel: 01293 433036 Fax: 01293 433036

Voyages of Discovery is a trading name of Tidewater Travel Limited

ABTA

ATOL

Viagra takers find short cut to big savings

IMPOTENCE sufferers have found a way to save money on Viagra. Instead of buying pills with the lowest doses, they are buying the strongest and cheapest ones up.

The Government has asked GPs not to prescribe the impotence pill on the National Health Service but it is available on private prescription, allowing patients to buy it.

The tablets come in three strengths: 25mg, 50mg and 100mg. Most patients are given the 50mg tablets at first and the doctor then adjusts the dose depending on the effectiveness.

Viagra is normally prescribed in packs of four, regarded by GPs as an adequate month's supply. Stronger tablets cost more. With the chemist's mark-up, a patient will pay about £6.22 per 25mg pill, £7.26 per 50mg pill and £8.80 per 100mg. Big savings can be made by a patient who can obtain larger dose pills to cut up.

A 100mg cut in two means a 50mg dose would cost £4.40 – a saving of £2.86. Cut into four for a patient needing only 25mgs, the 100mg pill saves £4.02 per dose.

Doctors should only prescribe pills of the correct strength, but a survey by the GPs' newspaper *Doctor* has found that many GPs who run impotence clinics say they know that dozens of patients

Patients are buying top strength pills to split in two, reports Ian Murray

cheaper and more effective than any of its rivals."

He said that some pharmacists might also reduce their mark-up on the stronger pills as a loss leader, hoping to sell tonics and other products to patients with impotence.

Doctors have been issuing private prescriptions for Viagra after government guidance last September not to issue it on the NHS. The British Medical Association has now advised members that they are legally able to prescribe the drug on the NHS despite the government guidance.

They will continue to be able to do so until March 4 when the Government completes a consultation process on new rules that would limit Viagra on the NHS to people with a number of specific conditions or those considered to be in "severe distress".

Doctors should only prescribe pills of the correct strength, but a survey by the GPs' newspaper *Doctor* has found that many GPs who run impotence clinics say they know that dozens of patients

said: "The trouble is the patient has to pay for a consultation, pay for a private prescription and pay an extra 50 per cent on the cost at the chemist. It makes it all very expensive and you can understand why people do it."

The spokesman added: "This practice is potentially dangerous and is the result of government attempts to restrict the use of a drug which is

Sterilisation can 'raise CJD risk'

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

THE way that surgeons sterilise their instruments in British hospitals may increase the risk of spreading new variant CJD, scientists have found.

The discovery will increase pressure on surgeons to use disposable instruments for many operations, despite the extra cost.

The brain protein believed to be responsible for nvCJD is extremely hard to destroy. Conventional sterilisation involves heating instruments to 134-138°C, quite hot enough to destroy normal pathogens.

The prion protein not only survives these temperatures but, in some cases, becomes more stable, according to experiments done by David Taylor of the Institute for Animal Health in Edinburgh.

He heated tissue samples for nine, 18 and 30 minutes, to

temperatures of 134°C and 138°C. He found that while the sample treated at 134°C did not remain infectious, the one treated at the higher temperature did.

Dr Taylor told *New Scientist* that he believes the higher temperature may "fix" the protein in the abnormal shape which is the hallmark of the disease.

It is known that surgical instruments can pass on CJD. In the 1970s doctors reported that instruments used to study epileptic patients had transmitted the classical version.

Concern has increased since it was shown that the infectious agent is present in the tonsils and other tissues before symptoms of the disease appear. This means that many routine operations could run the risk of transmission.



A hectic lifestyle and not always sticking to a sensible diet could make you more susceptible to nasty cold viruses. New Zinc Defence's advanced formula helps support your immune system's resistance to infection.



HELPING YOU FIGHT OFF COLDS.



Helen Doman meeting the Prince and Simon Fielding yesterday

Prince shows faith in hands-on method of healing

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE Prince of Wales, an occasional martyr to the pain of old polo injuries, watched intently as Helen Doman, prostrate on a table, had her slim legs gently pulled, pushed, bent and turned.

"You can see," explained Simon Chesney, the osteopath manipulating the limb, "how the anterior-superior iliac spine is affected; the pelvis is twisting slightly to compensate for the leg." The Prince furrowed his brow. "Oh, I see," he said, ploughing his hand into his hip pocket as though he had just felt a twinge of his own.

Mrs Doman, who is in her early forties, suffered a mild attack of polio at the age of three, and has regular osteopathy, without which she said she could never perform her aerobics. Thanks largely to the lobbying of the Prince, a convinced believer in alternative therapies, practitioners now have their own statutory General Osteopathic Council. Yesterday the Prince was opening its new headquarters in South London. By May next year, all practising osteopaths will have to be registered.

The Prince avoided disclosing whether he had osteopaths himself, although he admitted that some of his horses had received their ministrations. He added: "As I have two rapidly growing offspring who are constantly injuring themselves at sport, I am glad there are osteopaths around to help them." He hoped that official recognition of osteopathy by the medical establishment would give encouragement to other alternative therapies that deserved equal status. "There are an awful lot of people out there who would be much better treated by a holistic approach to healthcare."

There are about 3,000 practising osteopaths in Britain. According to the council, they are most frequently consulted for lower back pain, one of the commonest ailments in a species not yet fully evolved to walking on its hind legs. Sports injuries, and whiplash neck injuries from road accidents, are also high on the osteopathic agenda.

Simon Fielding, chairman of the council, said that the Prince had played a key part in helping the profession to become the first of the complementary forms of medicine to be recognised by statutory self-regulation under a 1993 Act of Parliament. "He called all the right people together, from Parliament and orthodox medicine, to convince them that osteopathy was a profession in its own right."

That's a cracker!

Why is it a cracker?

Because with Egg you can have a mortgage and savings account in one.

That's simple.

Because with Egg you can take out any cash advance, with no form to fill in.

That's easy.

Because with Egg you can get a loan accepted off the high street and it has no fees for pay off.

That's fast.

Because with Egg you can get a payment holiday option if ever I need one.

That's fair.

Because with Egg you can offer a payment holiday option if ever I need one.

That's sensible.

Because with Egg you can't just pay off your mortgage.

That's true.

If you want an individual tailored mortgage, loan or savings account, call us on 08450 388 388, or visit us at www.egg.com. Egg is a division of Prudential Building plc.

Calls to Egg will be recorded. Payment breaks require 12 consecutive monthly re-payments in order to take a break of up to six months, and are offered at Egg's discretion. Typical example: If you borrow £50,000 over 25 years at an annual interest rate of 6.45% (variable typical APR 6.7%, on property valued at £100,000), the mortgage will be repaid by 300 monthly payments of £308.27 and a single repayment of capital of £50,000 at the end of 25 years. Net monthly payments show the benefits of tax relief at 10% under the MIRAS scheme. MIRAS is calculated under current tax legislation and may alter. It is available on the first £30,000 of the mortgage only. The total amount repayable is £157,375 gross (this includes an electronic funds transfer fee of £25). The maximum loan to value for a re-mortgage is 90% of the purchase price at valuation. The cost of any agreement put in place to repay capital has not been included in this example. All rates correct as from 1st February 1999 and are subject to variation. An administration charge of £25 is payable if the mortgage is redeemed before the end of the term. Egg will cover standard legal fees only if you are re-mortgaging and if your property is in England or Wales. If you choose to appoint your own solicitor/your property is in Scotland or Northern Ireland, Egg will contribute £200 towards legal costs. All mortgages are subject to Egg's lending policy. Egg requires a first charge on the borrower's home as security and requires the borrower to have enough life cover to repay the amount outstanding at any time on the mortgage. Written quotations for mortgages are available on request from Egg, Poole North, Waterfront West, Dudley Road, Branksome Hill, West Midlands DY5 1LU. Egg mortgages and loans are available to UK residents aged 18 years and over subject to status and conditions. Egg mortgages and loans are not available in the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. Written quotations for loans are available on request from Egg, Riverside Way, Pride Park, Derby, DE9 3GG. Prudential Building plc is registered in England and Wales, Registered office 142 Holborn Barn, London EC1R 2BL. Registered number 2599842. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

**HONDA**

First man, then machine

Some like it hot, others prefer it a little cooler.
Like the drivers of these Honda Civics.

With air conditioning as standard across the range, when it's stifling outside, there's always a fresh breeze inside.

What is hot about the Civics is the VTEC engine, which delivers high performance yet is also one of the most economical in its class.

Also as standard across the entire range are power steering, electric windows and remote keyless entry.

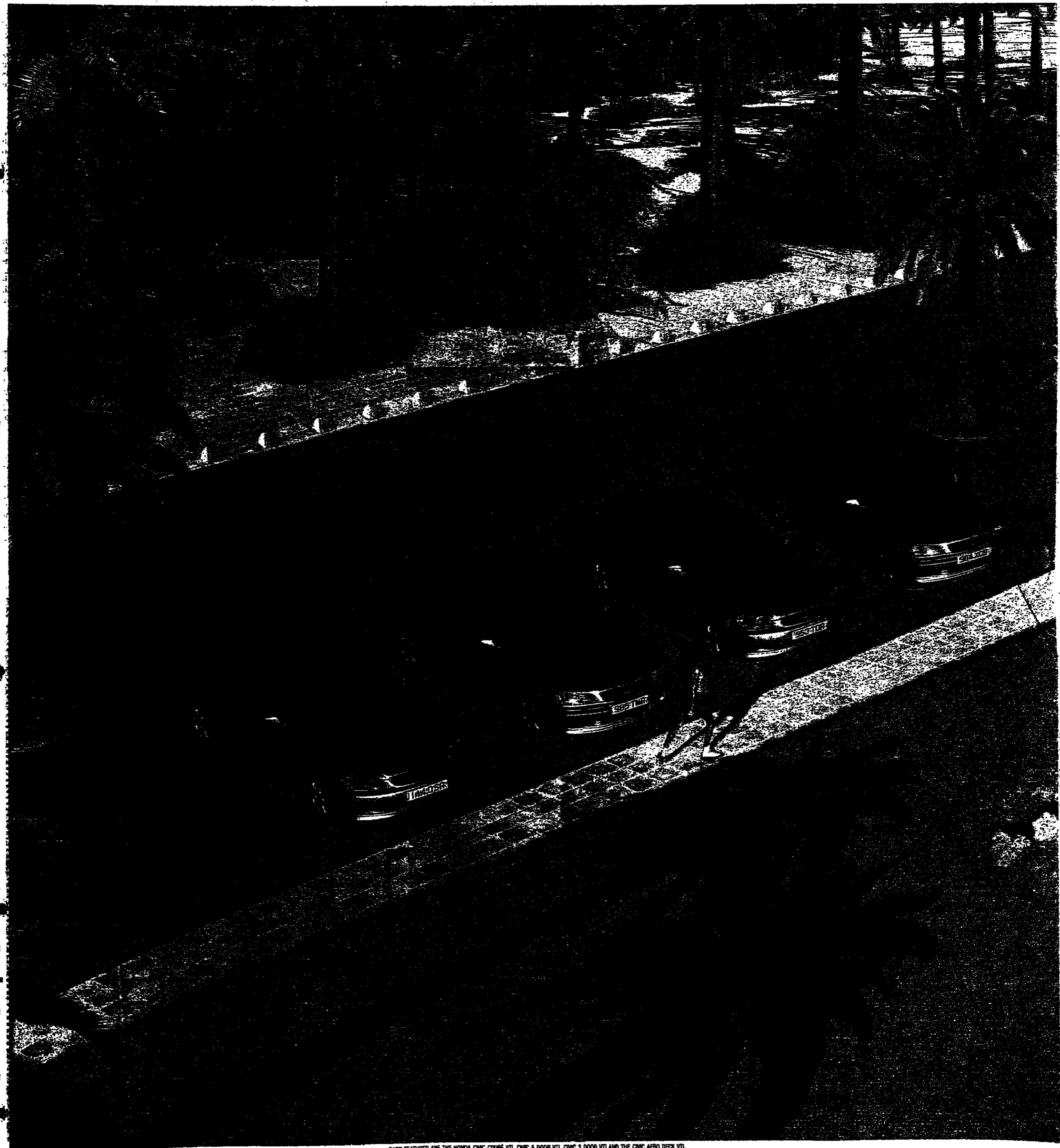
And with a wide choice of engines and trim levels in the 3-door, the 5-door, the Coupe and the Aero deck (the sports estate), there are 23 different models in all.

So the only thing that could possibly make you hot under the collar is which one to choose.

For further details, telephone 0845 159 159. And find out how we're leaving our competitors in the cold.

The new generation Civics.
Technology you can enjoy, from Honda.

St. Tropez outside. St. Moritz inside the air-conditioned Civics.

CARS FEATURED ARE THE HONDA CIVIC COUPE VTI, CIVIC 5 DOOR VTI, CIVIC 3 DOOR VTI AND THE CIVIC AERO DECK VTI.

ss
us
036 0001

Benefits crackdown on single mothers

By JILL SHERMAN AND ALEXANDRA FREAN

SINGLE mothers will have to attend jobcentre interviews shortly after their babies are born or risk losing benefit under proposals in the Welfare Reform Bill published yesterday.

Alistair Darling unveiled what he called "harsh but justifiable" plans to force claimants — for housing benefit, income support, council tax benefit, lone parent benefit and disability benefits — to attend interviews in an attempt to end the "something for nothing" culture.

"There is no unconditional right to benefit," the Social Security Secretary said. "People

have a right to expect help to get into work, and security if they cannot. In turn they have a responsibility to take up that help. If you don't turn up you don't get the benefit."

Although he pledged that no single parents or disabled people would be forced to take a job, he admitted that even single mothers of young babies would be required to turn up to discuss job opportunities.

They would then be expected to return for successive interviews at regular intervals if they decided not to take up a job. These interviews would continue at "significant milestones", when for example

their child went to primary school. They would be expected to take jobs once their children left school.

Under the Government's New Deal, only lone mothers with children of five and over have to go for job assessment. But under the Welfare Reform Bill the Government has decided to have no minimum age for a first interview.

Mr Darling denied that any mother would be expected to attend the day after a child was born, but said it was "reasonable" to show what was on offer.

The Bill proposes that all benefit claimants must attend interviews within three days of making their first claim. The interview would discuss entitlement, reasons for not working and help in getting a job.

All claimants of working age, apart from lone parents and disabled people, would then be required to take a job within a defined length of time or lose unemployment benefit. The remainder lone parents and disabled — would be expected to return for repeat interviews.

The Disability Benefits Consortium, which represents 500 organisations, said that the Bill, which will save £750 million, would deny benefits to thousands of people who become disabled in the future.

James Strachan, chief executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, said the government had failed to tackle real problem facing disabled people.

more independent. "People fear this kind of harassment will be oppressive, particularly to those with mental illness or going through a relationship breakdown," she told Radio 4.

Frank Field, who lost his job as Welfare Reform Minister last summer, said that compulsory interviews could simply be a way of "rushing up" claimants unless the scheme was adequately resourced.

The Bill also details:

□ The introduction of stakeholder pension schemes for middle-to-high earners and a second state pension for low earners to supplement the basic state retirement pension.

□ The extension of widow's benefit to men. This includes a lump sum of £2,000 and a weekly payment of £85 to those with dependent children.

□ Divorce reforms to enable women to claim a fair share of their husband's pension.

□ Reform of benefit for the long-term sick, children and young people.

The Disability Benefits Consortium, which represents 500 organisations, said that the Bill, which will save £750 million, would deny benefits to thousands of people who become disabled in the future.

James Strachan, chief executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, said the government had failed to tackle real problem facing disabled people.



Labour has adopted *All Together Now* by Liverpool group, The Farm, above, as its anthem to woo voters in Scotland

Labour going for song in Scotland

POLITICIANS' HIT PARADE

■ Harold Wilson: *Hello Dolly*, which he adapted to "Hello Harold, it's so good to see you back when you belong".

■ Ronald Reagan: *Stand By the USA*, appropriated from Bruce Springsteen.

■ George Bush: *Don't Worry Be Happy*: Bobby McFerrin.

which is based on Johann Pachelbel's 17th-century Canon and Gigue, has previously been heard on the terraces at Everton and during the 1992 election campaign when Neil Kinnock led Labour to one of its most humiliating defeats.

It was originally written about an incident on Christmas Day in 1914 when British and German troops declared an unofficial ceasefire and left their trenches to exchange gifts, sing carols and play football. Party managers have opted to re-record the song using Glaswegian musicians to give the song a more Scottish feel.

Both feature a memorable chorus and catchy tune. In a bid to encapsulate pro-union policies, Labour has altered the ten-year-old lyrics of the anthem from "Altogether now in

man's land" to "Altogether now in this land". The chant will be used during party election broadcasts and at rallies featuring parliamentary candidates. The former top ten hit,

which is based on Johann Pachelbel's 17th-century Canon and Gigue, has previously been heard on the terraces at Everton and during the 1992 election campaign when Neil Kinnock led Labour to one of its most humiliating defeats.

It was originally written about an incident on Christmas Day in 1914 when British and German troops declared an unofficial ceasefire and left their trenches to exchange gifts, sing carols and play football. Party managers have opted to re-record the song using Glaswegian musicians to give the song a more Scottish feel.

Crisis, what crisis? MPs ignore economic woes

Peter RIDDELL
ON POLITICS

Britain is on the brink of a recession, but you would hardly think so from listening to politicians. On the day when the Bank of England's Quarterly Inflation Report suggested that growth in the first half of this year was "expected to be close to zero", not a single MP raised the outlook for the economy at Prime Minister's Questions. There was not a word from William Hague — although he attacked tax increases — or anyone else. Later, Francis Maude weighed in with a warning which blamed Labour's higher taxes, penalties for savers, a reckless spending spree and extra burdens on business. Mr Maude has a good point about how the burdens on business may hinder industry's long-term position but, in the short term, he is in danger of repeating the mistake of Gordon Brown when he was Shadow Chancellor of being Mr Doom and Gloom.

While Mr Brown was prob-

ably slightly too optimistic over the economy and public spending plans last autumn, Mr Maude's fears then turned out to have been greatly exaggerated. The difference between the Treasury forecast in November of growth of 1.5 per cent this year and the Bank's latest projection of 0.5 to 1 per cent is not significant in itself, and is consistent with the Treasury's broad view. This does not of itself invalidate Mr Brown's public spending plans. Indeed, the increase in spending, and particularly public investment, planned from April, will offset the weakness of manufacturing and aid recovery.

The Bank's Quarterly Inflation Report, like most outside

the Link

The Link Introduces "Mobile Number Transfer"

Upgrade your mobile phone and keep your number

People used to be chained to their old mobile by its number. Now, The Link introduces "Mobile Number Transfer". Change your phone, tariff, even network, without changing your number! With Britain's biggest range of mobiles in-store, including the latest, smallest, most colourful new models, there's never been a better time or place to upgrade!

LOWEST EVER ORANGE MONTHLY TARIFF

GET 20 MINUTES OF CALLS EVERY DAY FOR ONLY 50P PER DAY — THAT'S JUST 2.5P PER MINUTE*

MOTOROLA ORANGE DIGITAL MOBILE

- Ultra small and compact
- Send and receive fax and computer data
- Send and receive short text messages
- Up to 110 minutes talktime/45 hours standby

Model: StarTAC 501 Was £29.99*

SALE PRICE
£24.99*
Plus £35 for Connection

One of the smallest and lightest phones around.

MOBILE CHOICE - WINTER 98/99

THE EASY ROUTE TO THE RIGHT MOBILE

*When you take out a new connection to an Orange monthly tariff. Ask for details. **When you connect to the Orange Everyday 20 tariff - free calls are off-peak calls only - monthly bill charges vary depending on the number of days in the month. 50p per day in a 30 day month = £15.25 per minute for first 20 minutes of off-peak standard calls per day only. You can take your existing number to all mobile phones. Current Celnet Pre-Pay Customer connected to either an Orange or One 2 One monthly tariff plan cannot take their number to their own mobile provider provider. If you find exactly the same package cheaper

HALF PRICE
MOBILE CASES,
IN-CAR CHARGERS
& ACCESSORY PACKS
**HURRY! SALE
MUST END MONDAY**

**BRITAIN'S
BIGGEST RANGE**

Choose from over
50 mobiles

**EXPERT
ADVICE**

We will help you choose
the right network,
tariff and handset

**GUARANTEED
LOWEST PRICES**

We won't be
beaten on price*

**OVER 170 STORES
NATIONWIDE**

Freephone
0500 222 666
For your nearest store
or to order direct



The Link

Red Sea Discovery

10 Nights - Thursday 15th - Sunday 25th April 1999

CRETE ~ SYRIA ~ CYPRUS ~ ISRAEL
EGYPT ~ SUEZ CANAL ~ JORDAN

Day 7. Transit of the Suez Canal. Bridge

costume林 will be given as we make our daytime transit of this famous waterway.

Day 8. Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt. Cross the desert to St. Catherine's Monastery, in the shadow of Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Or visit Naama Bay and explore the beautiful coral reefs.

Day 9. Agua, Jordan. Two memorable tours are available today. To Petra, the rose red city half in the middle of the Siyuan desert.

Day 10. Larnaca, Cyprus. Enjoy a full day visit to the island's capital Nicosia.

Day 11. Ashdod, Israel. A full day in the Holy Land with a choice of tours to Jerusalem & Bethlehem, Galilee or Masada and the Dead Sea.

Day 12. Port Said, Egypt. See the treasures of Tutankhamun in the Museum of Antiquities before visiting the famous pyramids on the edge of the Sahara Desert. Or travel beyond Cairo to Saqqara and Memphis.

Days 10 & 11. Safaga, Egypt. Enjoy a full day or overnight tour to Luxor, Karnak and the Valley of the Kings and visit some

magnificent sites on both the East and West Banks of the Nile. Those not taking the overnight tour will, on the last day, enjoy a leisurely tour with lunch, to the small town of Hurghada, before a late afternoon flight home to the UK.

The Treasury at Petra, a

Day 13. Transit of the Suez Canal. Bridge

costume林 will be given as we make our daytime

transit of this famous waterway.

Day 14. Return flight to the UK.

Day 15. Return flight to the UK.

Day 16. Return flight to the UK.

Day 17. Return flight to the UK.

Day 18. Return flight to the UK.

Day 19. Return flight to the UK.

Day 20. Return flight to the UK.

Day 21. Return flight to the UK.

Day 22. Return flight to the UK.

Day 23. Return flight to the UK.

Day 24. Return flight to the UK.

Day 25. Return flight to the UK.

Day 26. Return flight to the UK.

Day 27. Return flight to the UK.

Day 28. Return flight to the UK.

Day 29. Return flight to the UK.

Day 30. Return flight to the UK.

Day 31. Return flight to the UK.

Day 32. Return flight to the UK.

Day 33. Return flight to the UK.

Day 34. Return flight to the UK.

Day 35. Return flight to the UK.

Day 36. Return flight to the UK.

Day 37. Return flight to the UK.

Day 38. Return flight to the UK.

Day 39. Return flight to the UK.

Day 40. Return flight to the UK.

Day 41. Return flight to the UK.

Day 42. Return flight to the UK.

Day 43. Return flight to the UK.

Day 44. Return flight to the UK.

Day 45. Return flight to the UK.

Day 46. Return flight to the UK.

Day 47. Return flight to the UK.

Day 48. Return flight to the UK.

Day 49. Return flight to the UK.

Day 50. Return flight to the UK.

Day 51. Return flight to the UK.

Day 52. Return flight to the UK.

Day 53. Return flight to the UK.

Day 54. Return flight to the UK.

Day 55. Return flight to the UK.

Day 56. Return flight to the UK.

Day 57. Return flight to the UK.

Day 58. Return flight to the UK.

Day 59. Return flight to the UK.

Day 60. Return flight to the UK.

Day 61. Return flight to the UK.

Day 62. Return flight to the UK.

Day 63. Return flight to the UK.

Day 64. Return flight to the UK.

DON RYAN/AP

Whaling threatens Iceland with ruin

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN REYKJAVIK

THE return of Willy the killer whale to Iceland may save one of Europe's most prosperous nations from bankruptcy. For as Keiko, the orca's Icelandic name, is trained for release into the Arctic, Icelanders are constantly reminded that whales command fierce passions around the world. The huge tourist interest in Keiko's rehabilitation may just stave off a move that would provoke outrage and a devastating consumer boycott — a resumption of whaling.

This spring the Althing, the country's thousand-year-old parliament, is likely to demand the immediate lifting of the present ban. The Government, which stalled after similar demands last year, may find it harder to delay this time.

Yet if even a single whale is harpooned, Iceland faces ruin. What the Government most fears is reaction in Britain, Germany and America — its leading markets. Despite diversification and the creation of a promising research and high technology market, fish still account for 75 per cent of exports. As one diplomat put it: "No fish — no Island."

Icelanders were forced to stop whaling ten years ago by international pressure. But in a nation with a strong sense of history, it is not a commercial operation; it is an affirmation of their traditional way of life. The Government knows the

dangers. David Oddsson, the Prime Minister, leads a centre-right coalition that is cruising to a comfortable victory in May's general election. An enviable standard of living has weathered an earlier recession and disposable household income has risen 10 per cent in recent years. The evidence of prosperity is all-around — restaurants, fashion boutiques and travel agents promoting Mediterranean holidays.

All could go if the fish market collapses. Every Icelander recalls with a shudder the disappearance of herring stocks in 1967, when overfishing wiped out the livelihood of whole towns and coastal settlements. Thousands were unemployed, hundreds emigrated.

Icelanders argue that the rapidly growing whale population must be culled as it is depleting fish stocks and they would catch only the common minke whales. Diplomats say even that makes no sense: to be commercial, whalers would have to catch at least 100 a year. Iceland could consume only 50, and there is no foreign market even Japan no longer imports its favourite delicacy.

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry, and more money could be earned from foreigners coming to watch whales gambol at sea. Keiko's arrival from Oregon has sharpened the contradictions. Returning it to the sea will cost more than \$2.5 million (£1.52 million).

Yeltsin's bad jet day

FROM ALICE LAGNADO
IN MOSCOW

A PLANE carrying President Yeltsin collided with an aircraft bearing Massimo D'Alema, the Italian Prime Minister, as it taxied down the runway at Vnukovo-2 airport here on its return from King Hussein's funeral in Amman. The incident has heightened Russians' mirth over their hapless leader:

The Ilyushin 96 took the tail wing off the pained Italian DC9. Another plane had to be flown in to take home Signor D'Alema, who was in Moscow on a working visit.

Moskovsky Komsomolets said yesterday that neither

leader knew about Monday's incident until later because the collision was so gentle.

But Russian newspapers had a field day. "Reinforcing from somebody else's funeral, Yeltsin just avoided going to his own," *Moskovsky Komsomolets* said. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* ran a cartoon showing the President wearing wings and about to walk off a cliff. Yevgeny Primakov, the Prime Minister, is standing behind him with a parachute.

A shoddy runway is being blamed. "It's no secret that Vnukovo-2 has been asking for money for repairs for a long time. Now the President has been convinced," said *Kommersant Daily*.

SURPLUS COMPUTER STOCKS

TATUNG 266MHz COMPLETE MULTIMEDIA PC INC 56K MODEM & WINDOWS 98

- Cyrix 266MHz processor, 32MB RAM
- 2.1Gb hard disk, 3.5" floppy drive
- 24x CD ROM and 16 bit sound card
- 56K fax modem for the Internet
- Keyboard, mouse & Windows 98
- 14" SVGA colour monitor

£469

WITH DELUXE 17" M-RIS COLOUR MONITOR ADD £130

SAMSUNG SMARTVIEW 4300

Colour ink jet printer, scanner, fax & copier, 1200 dpi, 7 ppm mono, 3 ppm colour, 300 dpi scanner, with OCR software, plain paper fax, facsimile handset or PC to dial; plain paper photocopier; includes mono & colour cartridges, 1 year on-site warranty

£149

FUJI DIGITAL CAMERA DEAL

640 x 480 res, 24bit RAM card, fully automatic, built-in flash, inc software/cable

£119

DEC 500 COLOUR INK JET PRINTER

600 x 300 dpi res, 300 dpi graphics, 5 pages/min, 5 resident fonts, 128K buffer, includes colour cartridge

£59

BT PLAIN PAPER FAX MACHINE

Model DF450 - superb quality bubble jet printing on A4 plain paper, one touch dialling, 14 page memory, out of paper receive mode, list £42, on-site warranty

£175

BTC 20x INTERNAL CD ROM DRIVE

Easy installed 20x E-IDE CD ROM drive, with cables and software

£29

233MHz COLOUR CD NOTEBOOK

Intel Pentium 233MHz MMX mobile processor, 2.1Gb hard drive, 32MB RAM, 512K Cache, 8.5" floppy drive and 24x swapable CD ROM drive, 12.1" dual scan colour display, 1.5Mb video RAM, zoomed video port, integral sound and speakers, glideRAM, PCMCIA slots, NMH battery, weighs just 2.5kg, Win 95 installed

£820

ALL GOODS BRAND NEW (UNLESS STATED) AND FULLY GUARANTEED
ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT (17.5%) — OFFERS MUST CLOSE 20 FEB

Morgan Computer Co.

64-72 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1AX 071-255 2115
54 Edgware Road, Marylebone, London NW1 2SH 0121-452 1141
11-12 Station Approach, Manchester M1 2SH 0161-227 1111
MAIL ORDER SALES CALL 0121-456 5564 FAX 0121-456 5564
Net delivery available to stock. All major credit cards. *late night Thursday 2.30pm.
<http://www.morgancomputer.co.uk>
e-mail sales@morgancomputer.co.uk
All prices + VAT (17.5%). Delivery extra. Goods subject to availability. E&OE.

Keiko, star of the film *Free Willy*, toying with a live crab in its aquarium pool in Newport, Oregon, before being flown to Iceland

New tax fear over copyright reforms

FROM CHARLES BREMNER
IN BRUSSELS

BRITAIN could be forced to impose a special tax on blank tapes and other equipment used for electronic copying under a plan backed yesterday by the European Parliament that seeks to compensate musicians and copyright holders.

A vote by the Parliament considerably toughened a draft directive from the EU Commission that aims to curb the illicit duplication of music, films and other materials using new digital methods.

The commission's draft law allowed copies of texts or recordings to be made for personal use without payment. But the Parliament has insisted that copyright holders must receive "fair compensation".

All EU states except Britain, Ireland and Luxembourg charge levies on blank tapes and discs to cover copyright fees. The law has yet to be considered by ministers, who must take account, but not necessarily adopt, the proposals.

WOW

THE 106 STARTS AT £7,120*

The Peugeot 106 range now starts from just £7,120* on the road. What's more, for only £149 a month** (plus deposit and final payment 13.9% APR) you can get a 106 Zest with 2 years Free Insurance*. Call our Openline on 0345 106 106 or visit our website www.peugeot.co.uk for more information.

106

PEUGEOT

*PRIVACY FINANCE AGREEMENT. 360 DEP 4.4 LITRE PETROL 3 DOOR, PASSPORT PRICE £3,450.00, DEPOSIT PAYMENT, CUSTOMER APR 13.9%, 36 MONTH PAYMENTS £1,140.00, FINAL PAYMENT £1,140.00, TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE £4,831.12. **A £100 DEPOSIT FEE AND A £100 SALES AGENCY FEE ARE TAKEN FROM YOUR FIRST ADVANCED PAYMENT BASED ON AN AGREED ANNUAL MILEAGE OF 8,000 MILES. PASSPORT PRICE INCLUDES 2 YEARS' AND 1 YEAR MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY PLUS 2 YEARS PEUGEOT EXTENDED WARRANTY. FINANCE SUBJECT TO STATUS. OVER £6,000 OVER A GUARANTEE MAY BE REQUIRED. WRITTEN QUOTATION AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM FINN FINANCE PLC, VERNON HOUSE, SICILIAN AVENUE, LONDON WC1A 2QQ. OFFER SUBJECT TO SATISFYING TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE INSURER AND APPLIES TO ALL 106 ZEST MODELS WHEN FUNDED THROUGH PEUGEOT PASSPORT. *106 ZEST 1.1L LITRE PETROL 3 DOOR. PRICE IS ON THE ROAD. SERVICE INTERVALS ARE 2 YEARS OR 20,000 MILES FOR PETROL AND 2 YEARS OR 16,000 MILES FOR DIESEL VEHICLES. WARRANTY FOR ALL VEHICLES IS ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF PURCHASE. EXCEPT IN JAPAN, ASIA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND SOUTH AFRICA. OFFERS FROM 1ST MARCH 1999.

Aids trial ex-minister defies court

Adam Sage in Paris watches a defendant in aggressive, indignant form at the tainted blood hearing

THE gulf separating French citizens from the Parisian elite appeared wider than ever yesterday as former ministers began giving evidence in their trial for manslaughter in connection with France's contaminated blood scandal.

For almost an entire day in the witness box, Edmond Hervé, the former Health Minister, was clinical, aggressive and indignant.

He interrupted the presiding judge, slapped down the state prosecutor, and repeatedly wagged an admonishing finger at the 70 people in the public gallery.

There was no hint of apology, no sign of modesty and no word for the 4,333 people who contracted Aids in the 1980s after receiving infected blood products.

Le Monde summed up the hearing as "surreal".

M Hervé, 56, is being tried along with the former Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, 52, and another former Health Minister, Georgina Dufoix, 55, for their alleged failure to ensure the screening and treatment of blood donated by high-risk groups, including prisoners, in 1985.

For a French political class buffeted by corruption scandals but never before called to account in a court of law, yesterday's events were historic - and, in M Hervé's eyes, clearly unacceptable.

M Hervé was Secretary of State for Health from 1983 to 1986, a controversial era in the history of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, which had just been discovered and remained uncharted ground for much of the world's medical profession.

"France acted very quickly" to stem the spread of the HIV virus through blood transfusions, he told the special court which is sitting for the first time, after being set up in 1993 to try ministers for alleged crimes committed while they were in office.

France was the third country in the world to introduce compulsory Aids blood tests

on August 1, 1985, aimed at avoiding the infection of haemophiliacs and hospital patients, he said.

The Socialist former minister did nothing to disguise his outrage at being asked to explain how the French authorities made the decisions which led to about 1,000 deaths from Aids.

"I was the conductor... not a mere laboratory chief," he told Roger Lucas, the state prosecutor, who repeatedly exclaimed "I'm astonished" when M Hervé admitted to not having been aware of reports by ministry and research officials over whether or not mandatory testing ought to be introduced.

Asked exactly how he delegated authority to his staff, M Hervé remained evasive. He said he "assumed responsibility for my aides", while admitting that discussion at the time on the new disease was "highly technical and I could only refer to advice from the experts".

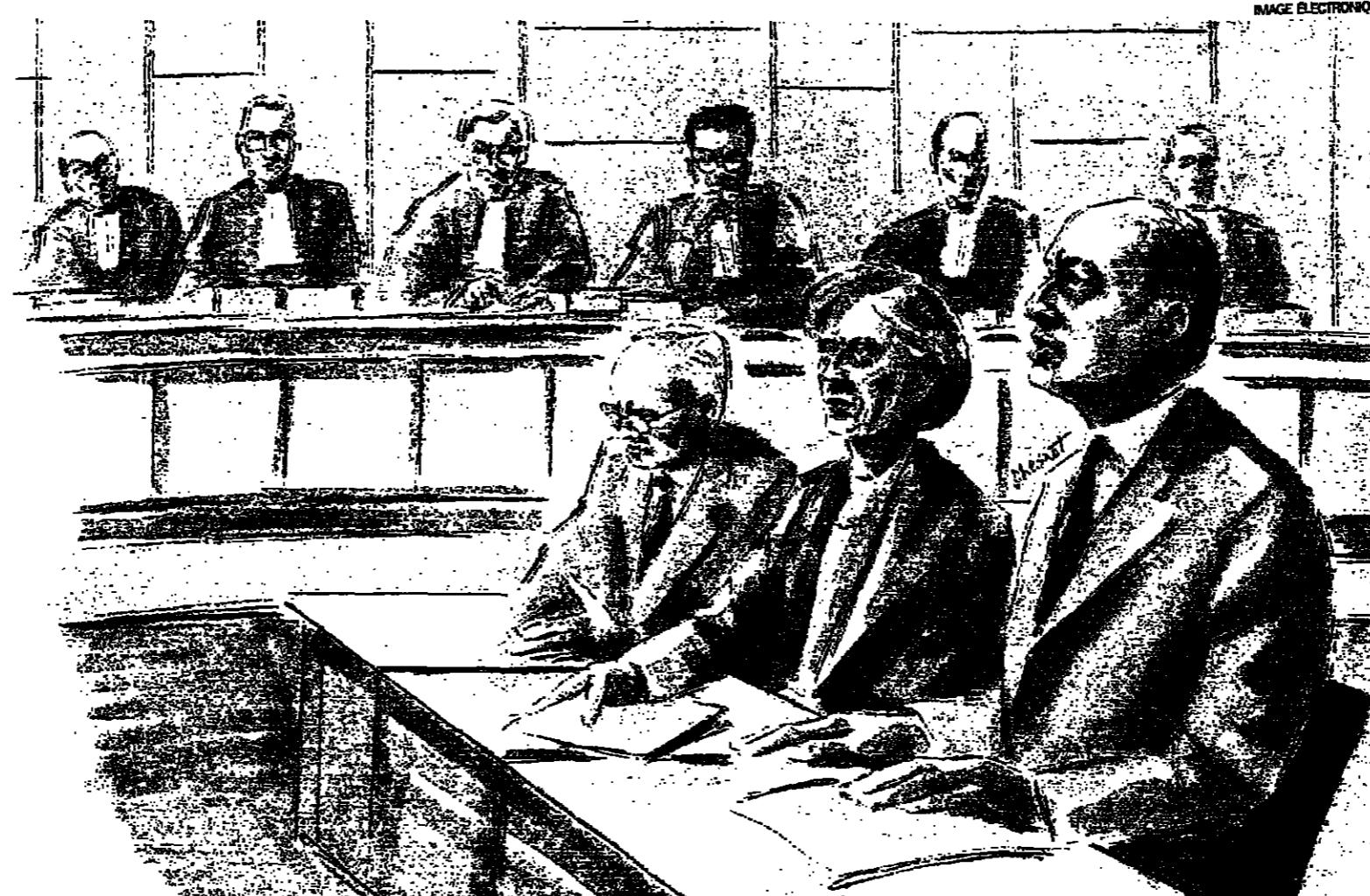
"I was an active and serious actor in the Government," M Hervé said, swaying forward and stabbing his hands menacingly towards the 12 MPs and three magistrates who will decide whether to send him to prison for up to five years.

"I was at the ministry every week from Tuesday morning to Friday afternoon," he told the court. "It was very rare that I left my office before 11pm. That wasn't a problem because I have a flat on the seventh floor of the ministry."

Behind him, relatives of the seven victims whose complaints sparked the case looked on in silence. On Monday, they had spoken briefly of their loved ones and their anger, before the judge, Christian Le Guehec, told them that they had no further contribution to make.

Yesterday, M Hervé spoke of "inter-ministerial agreements", "modalities", "methods" and "principles" in a largely uninterrupted, five-hour exposition designed to illustrate his competence.

Everything appeared to



The three accused, former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, right, Georgina Dufoix and Edmond Hervé in the courtroom in Paris yesterday

have been done to make him feel at home. The special Court of Justice of the Republic is, for instance, sitting in a room at the luxurious International Conference Centre in Paris, decorated in the manner to which the ministers have become accustomed. There is

France's Aids drama. The same, however, could not be said of the presiding judge's attitude towards the defendants.

Judge Le Guehec appeared embarrassed at poking his nose into a political world long used to doing what it likes when it likes, and he tried his

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

blue carpet, delicate lighting, hard wooden desks and a large deferential space between the defendants and their accusers.

"Glaçal" was how the Parisian daily *Le Figaro* described the courtroom, which leaves little place for the emotions of

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate criminal action," he said. "They're not a conscious fault, but a misjudgment." M Hervé interrupted,

best to make M Hervé's ordeal as easy as possible.

"I want to remind everyone that the defendants are being tried for negligence, not a deliberate

Neo-Nazis linked to Freetown rebels

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE United Nations and Western intelligence agencies are investigating a link between leading members of South Africa's neo-Nazi movement and President Taylor of Liberia. Together they are suspected of being behind a multi-national criminal consortium backing the rebels in Sierra Leone.

According to *Africa Confidential*, an authoritative fortnightly newsletter based in London, monitors monitoring the arms embargo against Liberia, which is sponsoring rebels in neighbouring Sierra Leone, have taken a close interest in Fred Rundle, a retired South African Army colonel.

Mr Rundle, who is a former spokesman for the far-right Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), has close ties with the Liberian leader. Mr Taylor has sent thousands of his fighters to support rebels trying to topple President Kabba, the newsletter said. The rebels have recently been reinforced by 300 Ukrainian mercenaries and hundreds of soldiers from Burkina Faso.

But the most important change in the effectiveness of the rebels, who last month came close to taking Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital, has been an improvement in their tactics and use of weapons.

Intelligence sources said they believe Mr Taylor had set up camps for the rebels and

Letters, page 21

Sale of ivory stirs poaching fears

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

THE United Nations' decision to allow three Southern African countries to sell 600 kilogrammes of stockpiled elephant ivory was condemned yesterday by Kenya's leading conservationist, Richard Leakey.

Dr Leakey, director of Kenya Wildlife Services, said the decision by the board of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) to allow Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to go ahead with the one-off sale of their ivory inventory to Japan was "a total violation of the agreements reached the year before last at the Cites

*Off list price. Minimum order value £75. Offer only open at time of quotation. Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Different discounts apply to conservatories and garage doors.

Everest, Everest House, REEPOST, Cuffley, Herts EN6 4YA



THE EVEREST JANUARY SALE

30% off

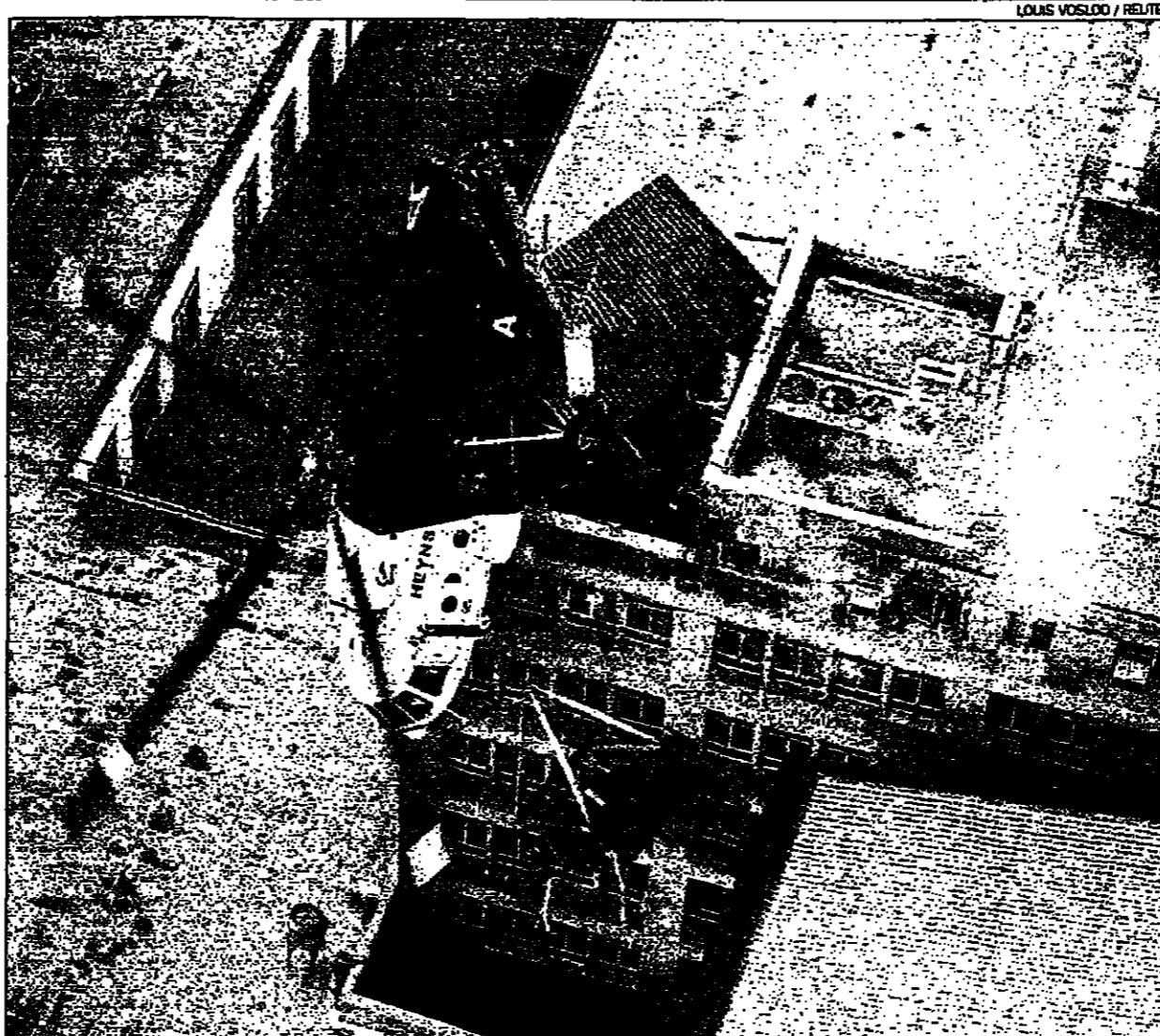
Do you need a warmer, quieter, more secure home?

Buy Everest windows and doors in January and claim 30% off.

Call free 0800 010123

Everest
FIT THE BEST

FEB99



Helicopter plunge from roof kills four

A helicopter crashes on top of a building, left, in the centre of Cape Town yesterday. A moment later it exploded in flames, killing all four people on board.

Mark Romberg, a South African police spokesman, said: "The helicopter was dropping off an air conditioner. Its tail rotor hit a sign and it crashed. All four occupants are dead."

Firemen, above, managed to put out the blaze on top of the building where the Russian-built Mi8 helicopter crashed at 6.25am, just before

the morning rush hour and opposite one of the city's luxury hotels. "All of a sudden the back rotor struck the sign at the side of the building," Jimmy Ansten, who saw the crash from his hotel room, said. "The helicopter then spun around... and plummeted into the top of the building and burst into flames."

One of the rotor blades lay in the road below, and debris from the crash flew across the street, damaging two rooms at the hotel. But none of the occupants was injured, police said. (Reuters)

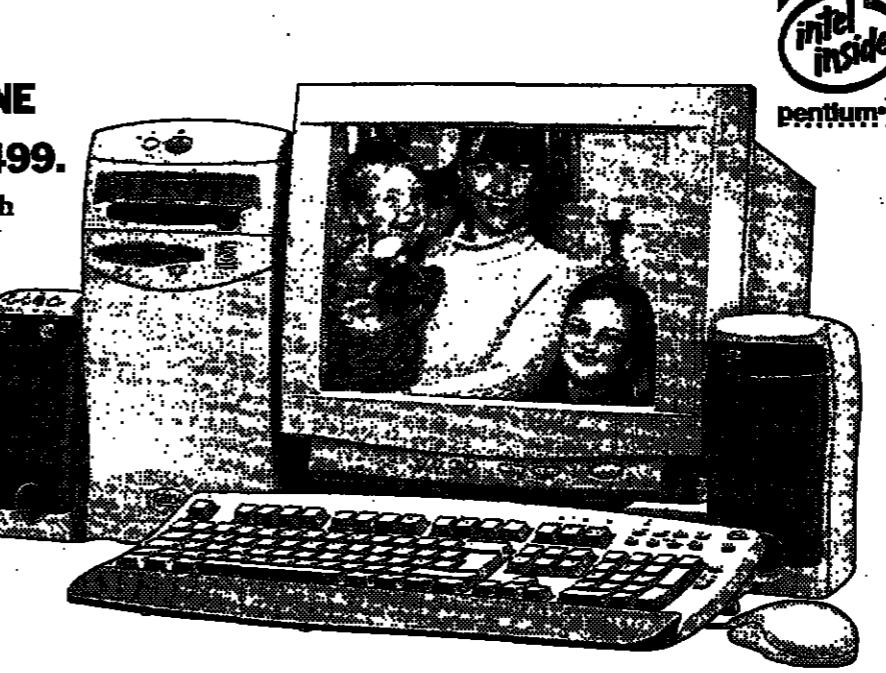
Buy the PC Get the Olympus camera free!

THE DIGITAL CAMERA ALONE

SELLS ELSEWHERE FOR £499.

Digital photography doesn't get much better than this. A superb Olympus camera (sold for up to £499 inc VAT in other shops), colour scanner and printer. Plus over £1000's worth of software, including image editing so the only thing that limits what you do to your pictures is your imagination. And with nothing to pay for a year, there's nothing to stop you snapping it up now.

PC '98
Certified



pentium® II

Home Studio™ Enthusiast System 400

NOTHING TO PAY, NOT EVEN A DEPOSIT, UNTIL THE YEAR 2000

Intel® Pentium® II Processor 400MHz
90MB Fast SD RAM
8.4GB Hard Disk Drive
15" SVGA 28 Colour Monitor
BMG Graphics Card
5 Speed DVD ROM Drive compatible with CD
Voice Fax/Modem
FREE Trial Internet Access
Windows 98
FREE Olympus C840L Digital Camera & Image Editing Software
Epson Stylus 440 Colour Printer
Flatbed Colour Scanner
Over £1000 of Microsoft® and Other Software,
including 4 DVD Titles

FREE
MICROSOFT
WINDOWS 98
INTERACTIVE
TUTORIAL
SOFTWARE

Latest Tiny Price
£1199 ex VAT

£1408.83 inc VAT

PRICES EXCLUDE DELIVERY

Customer Support Worldwide
0800 020 2222 ext 2121

Olympus Digital Camera Software Worldwide
0800 020 2222 ext 2105

Triumph for a love forbidden by Hitler

THE triumph of lesbian love over Nazi barbarism is the theme of a new German film, telling the extraordinary true story of a forbidden relationship during the Third Reich, which opened the 49th Berlin Film Festival yesterday.

The film, *Aimée and Jaguar*, by Max Färberböck, an award-winning television director, has already received a welter of advance publicity and seems likely to follow Steven Spielberg's epic *Schindler's List* as a cinematic example of an individual German's struggle to day the inhumanity of the Hitler era against all the odds.

The film sticks closely to the life story of Lily Wust, now 85, who in 1942 was one of the

Tony Paterson in Berlin reports on the true romance behind a film billed as the successor to Schindler's List

millions of ordinary German housewives so captivated by Nazi ideals that she was awarded the Mother's Cross medal for bearing four Aryans and was reputedly not averse to making comments such as "the Jews are the cause of all our ills — I can smell them a mile off".

That was until Frau Wust, then aged 28, played in the film by the actress Julianne Köhler, bumped into the woman who was to change her life in a cafe next to Berlin's Zoo

station — opposite the venue at which yesterday's film festival ceremonies took place.

Frau Wust met and fell in love with one whom, in Nazi terms, would have amounted to her reviled opposite: a 20-year-old, chainsmoking Jewish lesbian named Felice Schragenheim, a relative of Leon Feuchtwanger, a writer who was on the run from the Gestapo.

"No man had been capable of making me experience the emotional storm that I was

plunged into through this curious girl," Frau Wust recalls.

After discovering that her lover was Jewish, Frau Wust divorced her Nazi husband and underwent an ideological conversion that turned her into an ardent defender of persecuted Jews.

Adopting the nicknames Aimée and Jaguar, Lily and Felice, who is played by the actress Maria Schrader, embarked on a tempestuous love affair that was brought to a tragic end 12 months later.

Following the German Army's defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, the Nazis launched a campaign to render Berlin completely "Jew free". The remaining 7,000 Jews in the German capital were deported to concentration camps. Felice Schragenheim was picked up by the Gestapo on August 21, only hours after the couple had returned from a swimming trip. One of the few remaining photographs of the pair shows them on that day, clad in wartime bathing garb on the banks of Berlin's River Havel.

In desperation, Frau Wust travelled to the Theresienstadt

concentration camp in what was then Czechoslovakia to beg for her lover's release. Her pleas went unheard and Felice was sent on to the death camp at Gross Rosen where she was murdered.

Responding to the praise that has already been heaped on the film, Herr Färberböck said yesterday that his work was important because it provided a view of the Nazi era that "differs completely from the standard clichés about the period".

Mrs Wust, who was honoured by Bonn in 1981, said yesterday that *Aimée and Jaguar* was an important film because it was a living tribute to her former lover, "this unique person Felice".



Lily Wust, flanked by the actresses Maria Schrader, left, and Julianne Köhler at the Berlin Film Festival

ENNY NURAHENI / REUTERS

Royals run from Olympic scandal

FROM GILES TREMELT
IN MADRID

EUROPE'S royal families have started to distance themselves from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The crown prunes of Spain and The Netherlands have turned their backs on the organisation, which is being swamped by bribery scandals.

Crown Prince Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands has suspended his membership of the committee and said he would withdraw if Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC's President, failed to clean up the organisation.

The Spanish Government has advised Crown Prince Felipe, 31, that now is not the time to take up an offer of IOC membership.

Prince Willem-Alexander is one of six European royals who are members of the 114-strong committee. The Princess Royal is the most prominent.

Prince Albert of Monaco and princes or princesses from Belgium, Luxembourg and Lichtenstein are also members, as is Prince Faisal of Saudi Arabia.

None of the royal IOC members has been accused of taking bribes, but there are concerns about the wisdom of be-



longing to an organisation in which one in five members is accused of corrupt or unethical behaviour.

Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, said Prince Willem-Alexander would await a March meeting of the committee before deciding. "The special sitting of the IOC will

have to clarify whether the organisation has the power to clean up its act, and is therefore crucial for the question of whether the Prince of Orange will be able to continue," Mr Kok said.

Abel Matutes, the Spanish Foreign Minister, admitted that the Government and Spanish Royal Family had been considering the possibility of Prince Felipe joining. But he said the Government had decided this was not the right time for the Prince, a former Olympic yachtsman, to join.

"It is something to think about, but only in the long term," he said.

Spanish newspapers reported that Senor Samaranch, who is Spanish, had suggested that the Prince join the IOC when he visited Jose Maria Aznar, the Prime Minister, last month. "It could prove to be a poisoned gift," *El Mundo* commented.

An independent ethics panel set up by Salt Lake City, host to the 2002 Winter Games, has extended allegations of unethical behaviour to nine more IOC members. Twenty per cent of IOC members now stand accused of taking bribes from candidate cities. Fourteen members have resigned, been suspended or are under investigation by the IOC itself.

Willem-Alexander said he may leave the IOC



Timor rebel to join talks

FROM PATRICIA NUNAN IN JAKARTA

INDONESIA moved Xanana Gusmao, the East Timorese independence leader, from prison to house arrest yesterday so that he can play a key role in shaping the future of the disputed territory.

A few dozen supporters cheered as the 52-year-old rebel leader left Jakarta's Cipinang prison, where he was serving a 20-year term for

armed rebellion. Mr Gusmao was initially sentenced to death by a court in Dili, the East Timor capital, in 1992.

About 50 journalists in cars and on motorcycles gave chase as Mr Gusmao was driven to a house behind Jakarta's Salemba prison where the Indonesian Justice Minister, Muлади, welcomed him. He said: "Xanana is here to help solve the

problem of East Timor." Mr Gusmao said: "I feel I have been given a very heavy task and I have to do it ... with talks with all sides I can create an East Timorese nation."

Speaking of his new accommodation, a four-bedroom house, Mr Gusmao said: "It's more convenient for meeting other leaders." His wife and son remain in Australia.

WORLD IN BRIEF

280 feared lost in Borneo sinking

Jakarta: At least 280 people are missing — many of them feared dead — after an Indonesian ship with more than 300 on board sank off Borneo, a port official reported. He added that a passing cargo ship had rescued 19 people over two days in bad weather after Saturday's accident, but the rest were still unaccounted for. It was hoped that some of those missing had made it to the shore, either by swimming or clinging to drums or planks. The *Hartz Rimba* sank between Tambelan and Pengki islands, 124 miles northwest of Pontianak, apparently after pumps failed. Most of her passengers were workers for a logging company. (AFP)

Ethiopia expels envoy

Addis Ababa: Ethiopia ordered the Eritrean Ambassador to leave within 24 hours as intensive fighting along their joint border continued for a fifth day (Robin Lodge writes). Diplomats said that the expulsion closed one of the last channels for a negotiated settlement. Since the renewal of last year's hostilities, each country has accused the other of lying to convince the world that it is the victim of unprovoked aggression.

Anwar media blackout

Kuala Lumpur: The media were banned from reporting the trial of Anwar Ibrahim, the former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, for the second time in the three-month hearing (David Wain writes). Judge Augustine Paul declared that defence evidence on conversations between Mr Anwar and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister, was hearsay.

Record jail term ends

Rafael, Egypt: Mahmoud Sawarka, 69, the longest-held Arab prisoner in Israeli jails, returned home to a hero's welcome after a 22-year detention in the Jewish state. Nicknamed the Mandela of Egypt, Mr Sawarka was arrested in 1977 and received a 45-year sentence for attacking Israeli soldiers in the Sinai, leaving one dead, when the peninsula was under Israeli occupation. (AFP)

PRODUCT RECALL

RECALL OF PRESCRIBED CALPOL PAEDIATRIC SUSPENSION

A product recall has been issued by Warner-Lambert Consumer Healthcare concerning the following two prescription medicines:

Calpol Paediatric Suspension and Calpol Paediatric Sugar Free Suspension

The recalled products are only available on prescription from your doctor in individually dispensed and labelled bottles.

The paracetamol in the affected bottles has shown some signs of separation, which may have resulted in an increased paracetamol level in the surface layer.

If the product was shaken as directed prior to consumption, there should be no safety issue.

As a precautionary measure, if you have received a prescribed version of Calpol or another pink paracetamol suspension since the 1st of December 1998, DO NOT USE THIS PRODUCT. Please return the product to the pharmacist who dispensed it, as soon as possible.

If any of this product has been given to your child in the last 2-3 days or if you are in any way concerned, please speak to your doctor immediately.

This recall does not affect the following Calpol variants sold directly to the public by pharmacies i.e. sold without a prescription, in a purple carton:

Calpol Infant Suspension 70ml, 140ml and Sachets
Calpol Sugar Free Infant Suspension 140ml and Sachets
Calpol Six Plus and Calpol Six Plus Sugar Free Colour Free 100ml

Warner-Lambert is committed to providing safe and effective products to our patients. As part of that commitment, we are working with the Medicines Control Agency to ensure that this recall is accomplished as quickly as possible. We regret the necessity of this action and any inconvenience it may cause. We believe this action represents the appropriate precautionary measure. If you need further information, please call our Advisory Helpline: 0800 389 3897.

EXPENSIVE BA ----- DS!

Ryanair from*	BA from*
£ 69	£ 374
£ 129	£ 560
£ 119	£ 462 (i)
£ 129	£ 562 (ii)
£ 99	£ 534 (iii)
£ 99	£ 315

*Midweek return fares. BA fares to (i) Milan, (ii) Bologna, (iii) Bordeaux

 **RYANAIR**
THE LOW FARES AIRLINE

0870 333 1238 www.ryanair.ie or contact your local travel agent

MAKE IT VALENTINE

"Ma
"An absolute
"Simply
A British

door
go to my head

AT STO

Leaders on the diabetes battlefield



Dr Thomas Stuttaford reports on pancreatic transplants; the timing of King Hussein's death; St Valentine's obscure role as patron saint of epileptics; why the whole community should be vaccinated against meningitis; and the Bristol Cancer Help Centre

It is paradoxical that in many countries in Europe where it would be unwise to risk diluting whisky with the local water, the long-term survival rate after treatment for most, if not all, of the major cancers is better than in Britain. So used are we to reading statistics such as these, produced by the *European Journal of Cancer*, which show that our record only just beats Slovenia and Estonia and is worse than all other Western European countries, that we forget that we still lead the world in other branches of medicine.

Diabetes is the main cause of kidney failure and blindness in adults and a common cause of heart and arterial disease. It leads to more cases of amputation and impotence than any other.

In many patients diabetes is diagnosed early and is well controlled by medication. There is, however, a group of insulin-dependent diabetics whose disease defies the best-planned and most carefully executed management. The high levels of sugar in the blood, which are a feature of poorly controlled insulin-dependent diabetes, result in damage to the small blood vessels. It is these diseased blood vessels which produce the complications of a hardened retina and blindness, malfunctioning kidneys and renal failure, and the impairment of the nervous system which, together with arterial damage, causes impotence and bloodless feet.

As diabetes is the result of failure of the islets of Langerhans, which produce insulin in the pancreas, the obvious treatment would seem to be pancreatic transplants. These have been carried out in Minneapolis since 1965. Initially the outlook for the patients was not good, but some survived and one patient is still alive at least 25 years later.

As surgical techniques and knowledge about immuno-suppression (to prevent the body rejecting the new pancreas) improved, the results became better and better. Soon after the pioneer-

ing work in Minneapolis, about a dozen people underwent pancreatic transplantation in Britain but all died and, not unnaturally, the operation fell into disfavour.

However, work went on both in Minneapolis and elsewhere, and one young British surgeon, Mr Nadeem Hakim, went to America for more than five years of training in transplant surgery at Minneapolis, Johns Hopkins, and at the Mayo Clinic. He learnt, among other transplant techniques, the difficult art of transplanting the pancreas.

Mr Hakim is now the surgical director of the transplant unit at St Mary's Hospital, London, where he started a British pancreatic transplant programme less than five years ago.

Results at St Mary's are now as good as those in Minneapolis and better than anywhere else in Europe. In 80 per cent of those operated on, the new pancreas survives and the patient's diabetes is perfectly controlled.

So rapid is the improvement that although patients come into the operating theatre with sky-high blood sugar levels, these are absolutely normal and steady before they leave the theatre — even before their abdomen has been closed.

Unfortunately, many poorly controlled diabetic patients have had their disease for so long that their kidneys have already suffered severely. This does not necessarily daunt the transplant team, who can do a simultaneous pancreatic and kidney transplant — in fact, the operation is done so often that it is now familiarly known as an "SPK".

Likewise, if a patient receives only a pancreas, the operation is known as a "PTA" (pancreas transplant alone).

Another group of patients who have previously had a kidney transplant but with the root cause of their trouble — the unstable diabetes — uncured, have what is termed a "PAK" (pancreas after kidney) transplant.

Blood sugar is steady before they leave the theatre



It is thought that King Hussein became chilled by his wet drive through Amman, which decreased his resistance

How the rain caused a fatal chill

THE LATE King Hussein of Jordan's triumphant return to Amman, apparently in remission, brought relief to his many admirers outside, as well as within, his kingdom. No group was more surprised than the doctors when he had to make a rapid return to the Mayo Clinic.

It soon became clear that, however exuberant he had seemed in the drive through his rain-soaked capital, he was dying. As a last resort, another bone-marrow transplant from his sister was attempted but his body could cope no more and the graft was rejected.

Although his sister was a suitable donor in terms of tissue-type cross-matching, she is middle-aged.

Bone-marrow transplants work better from young donors. The question the doctors asked was whether the King's health, although apparently relatively good,

was already failing when he returned to Jordan or whether the trip was only to achieve political ends.

It was known that sooner or later the King would develop complications from his non-Hodgkin's lymphoma but death was not thought to be imminent. The explanation given is that it was the rain, and his soaking, which hastened his end. The suggestion is that he became chilled, which reduced his resistance — he was already on powerful immuno-suppressant drugs to protect an earlier bone-marrow transplant — and that an intercurrent organism lurking harmlessly in his body caused an overwhelming infection. In his weakened state, and with a high fever, the new transplant didn't help, and King Hussein lapsed into multi-systems failure.

Thunderbolts and flashes

A STUDY on the effects of the calendar on Britain's sex life suggests that Cupid is busier at the Christmas office party than on Valentine's Day.

February 14 doesn't figure as a significant factor in the report by Kaye Wellings of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, published in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*. The UK

birth rate particularly — but not entirely — in unmarried women, rises in September, 40 weeks after the Christmas party season. The number of abortions and those seeking HIV tests is greatest in the first quarter. Condom sales also peak just before Christmas. On the Continent, where New Year's Eve is the height of the festive season, the birth rate peaks in October.

As well as looking after lovers, St Valentine is also the patron saint of those with epilepsy. He was no doubt on the alert when the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles recently left the Ritz together. So unremitting were the flashes from the photographers' cameras that television companies felt it unwise to broadcast pictures for fear of

inducing epileptic seizures. Professor Colin Binnie of the Institute of Epileptology at King's College London has studied the effect of intermittent flashing lights on the brain. In 1997, when the badgers were zapping the goodies with their laser guns in the TV programme *Pocket Monsters*, the deep red of the flashes induced seizures in 700 people, mainly children, in Japan.

The colour of the flash is also important as the brain recognises differences in colour through the cells, rods and cones at the back of the eye. Reds induce seizures 100 times more readily than white light, and few reds are deeper than that on the TV screen. The interval between flashes also matters; 15 frames per second is the most dangerous. Al-

though boys watch more TV and play more video games than girls, it is twice as easy to induce a fit in females. There are no racial differences, although sub-Saharan Africans appear less susceptible. What-



St Valentine has a dual role

ever the nationality, the risk is reduced by watching TV in a well-lit room, having a 100Hz set and avoiding programmes with lots of flashes. (If you must watch them, do so with one eye covered.)

In France, seizures have been induced by shafts of light from the red evening sun shining through trees along roads and striking a driver's face. Farther afield, they have been triggered by flashes of light through the pillars of the Sydney harbour bridge.

The 17th-century herbalist Nicholas Culpeper recommended lilies for the "falling sickness"; probably he didn't distinguish simple faints from seizures. Professor Binnie has modern treatment available but in order that his research may continue, the Halifax building society is selling lilies of the valley in its branches this month in aid of the Institute of Epileptology.

Meningitis: vaccinate the community

PARENTS in Pandypridd, where there have been 11 cases of meningitis Group C in the area, seven from three schools, are bound to question whether the situation would have been different if preventive antibiotics and vaccination had been used earlier on a wider population. Others question whether the present protocol for treating meningitis is too rigid and limited and whether we make adequate use of the vaccine already available against meningitis Group C. In a slightly earlier age, we would not have considered that a vaccine, which offers protection for "only a few years" excluded us. If the then Departments

of Health had adopted a similarly stringent line, many infectious diseases would have continued to run rampant.

Boosters for one injection or another were part of life in the Forties and Fifties. Since meningitis Group C has a predilection for adolescents, it is hard to understand why, when there is an outbreak, the whole community isn't vaccinated.

A few years ago, when Uganda suffered an outbreak, the Danes were universally acclaimed for their generosity and foresight in providing blanket immunisation. If progress into research for a longer-acting vaccine continues at the same pace, if vaccinated, today's adolescents would then be covered until it became available. There is an argument for vaccinating adolescents at school. Adolescent life is a risky time for meningitis as they live a close, hugger-mugger community life in the

classroom and as weekend clubbers. Ecstasy-taking isn't the only dangerous habit; kissing carries its own hazards. Meningitis C lives in the back of the throat and mouth and is spread through coughs, sneezes and kissing. It frequently co-

incides with a flu outbreak, possibly because the resistance of the vulnerable is reduced, possibly because of the increase in coughing and sneezing. Teenagers would be well advised to enjoy party nights for a week or two.

Quality health insurance

from 50p a day

Call 0800 7799 55

to find out more

Prime Health

A member of the Standard Life Group

PROFESSIONAL

ADVICE ON IMPOTENCE

Erectile dysfunction, or impotence, is distressing for you and your partner. The condition, which affects one in ten men, is always the symptom of an underlying condition. That is why it is so important to seek professional advice from a qualified physician.

At the Wellman Clinic we have experienced doctors who specialise in diagnosing the cause of impotence and recommending treatment, where it is appropriate.

Call 0171 637 2018 now for an appointment.

THE WELLMAN CLINIC, LONDON W1X 9EA

<http://www.wellman-clinic.demon.co.uk>

THE SUNDAY TIMES



IN THE YEARS 2000-2009

An English city bans all vehicles ... War Channel shows battles as they happen ... surgeons inject brain tissue to cure memory-loss ... Disney part-funds Japanese lunar probe ... Phoebe's diary, a teenage-view of the new millennium ...

Don't miss week 1 of the Chronicle of the Future, a fascinating and thought-provoking five-part series. FREE THIS SUNDAY

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

'We're more like friends — after all, looks don't last for ever'

Victoria Adams and David Beckham on tears, telly and babies. Exclusive interview by Christa D'Souza, of Vogue

The three of us have arranged to meet in the lobby of the Midland Hotel in Manchester. They look surprisingly conspicuous for two so paranoid about security, dressed in matching white Polo Sport jackets, matching Stussy baseball caps and clinging onto each other so tightly you'd think pregnant Victoria was about to deliver her baby right then and there.

"Yeah, we feel like two kids coming in here in our jeans and our Puffys when everybody else looks so grown-up and posh, don't we?" David says Victoria in her small, diamond-hard voice, taking a dainty sip from the two Diet Cokes she has ordered. "Yeah, we do," agrees David shyly, as he takes his silver Nokia out of his pocket and places it prominently on the table.

Overgrown kids is exactly what Victoria Adams, 24, and David Beckham, 23, are and it's difficult not to feel a wave of affection at the thought of them carefully laying out the tabloids every morning to see which ones their pictures are in and discussing who is more famous: "He gets more respect because he is considered more talented," Victoria concludes.

The most touching image is of this sublimely handsome young lad, sitting in his dressing-room at home wondering which of the hundreds of brand-new outfits staring at him from the rails he should put on in the morning. According to his fiancée, he's paranoid about his appearance. "I always tell him he looks lovely," explains Victoria.

Let's not forget, though, that the pair of them haven't lived this curious fishbowl existence for very long. It wasn't so long ago that Posi and Gerti yes, they made up and yes, she'll be invited to their wedding were living with the rest of the girls in *Maidenhead* in a house so tiny that Victoria had to share a room with Emma

and Geri had to sleep in a cupboard.

Less than three years later and Victoria earns £80,000 a week and David makes about £20,000. Together they are probably worth in the region of £18 million. One of the more endearing things about the pair of them is that although they've worked hard to get there, they act as if they'd won their fortunes in the Lottery. Well, David does.

"It's the one thing David and I differ on," says Victoria. "He never looks at the price of anything, do you? But I'm not going to be a nagging bag. I'm here to make him happy."

One thing is certain: they are completely, utterly, unconditionally mad for each other. A goofy smile of complicity spreads across

David's picture-perfect features whenever his fiancée asks him one of her rhetorical questions. Victoria, meanwhile, prettily strokes and pats David with her babyish, stick-on French manicured fingers.

I assume she's being serious when she says she almost had the builders put side-by-side latches in the master bedroom.

"I've been in front of David right from the beginning," she shrugs, "but then we've always been more like friends. Well, looks aren't going to last for ever, are they?"

Indeed, it's hard to imagine how David would have survived without her support after that red card incident at last year's World Cup. Beckham admits to weeping only twice during the furor — when he saw his parents afterwards and when he met Victoria in New York. Of course, it still hurts — especially the taunts of TV presenter Jeremy Clarkson, who would like to get the Manchester United midfielder alone in a padded cell with a baseball bat. "A lot of people would have stopped themselves over that," Victoria says thoughtfully, and then leans over her bump to give

David yet another hug. "But don't worry, I'll look after you. Just send him round here. I'll beat him up..."

Love developed quickly, very quickly — and so did the baby. It wasn't easy at first, says Victoria, what with it not being planned, and being on tour in America, and perpetually having to vomit into a bucket at the side of the stage.

Now life's as cosy and nest-like as it can be. Victoria sees few people besides her family and spends most evenings curled up with David on the sofa in their newly decorated pad — described by her as "a cross between a pool's house and a whore's house" — watching their favourite TV show, *Friends*. By day they shop or take gentle strolls with their matching rotwelders Puffy and Snoop Doggy Dog.

Sometimes the couple even brave their local branch of Tesco. "It's fine. They're very posh round where we live," explains Victoria. "If anyone wants an

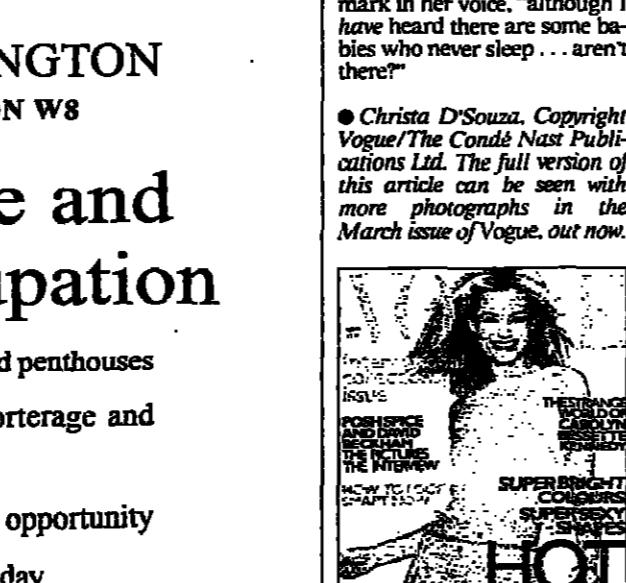
autograph I say 'Not until we've finished' and then I get all the children to line up and tell them that if they don't say please they're not going to get one. David and I were talking about this the other day, weren't we? We want children who are very well behaved."

Now she's pregnant again, Victoria and David, amazingly, have decided they are going to do all the child-rearing on their own, just like normal people, with help when they need it from Victoria's mum, Jacqui.

"But, then, I have the kind of job where I can do that," says Victoria. "I'll just take it into the studio with me in a backpack."

And nights? "Oh, straight in a cot because you have to draw the line somewhere," she says briskly, adding with an uncharacteristic question mark in her voice, "although I have heard there are some babies who never sleep... aren't there?"

• Christa D'Souza, Copyright Vogue/The Conde Nast Publications Ltd. The full version of this article can be seen with more photographs in the March issue of Vogue, out now.



Bring on the pomp and pageantry

The new parliament must open in style, says Magnus Linklater

No one watching the funeral of King Hussein of Jordan can have doubted the importance of ceremony. The dignified procession, the skirling pipes, the Last Post at the graveside, the presence of Prime Ministers and Presidents, all these sent out a signal of continuity and determination, not just to the Jordanian people, but to the outside world. It would be hard to overestimate the value of those few hours of public mourning — they were the King's last gift to his kingdom.

The ceremonial style of a nation says more about it than any number of political speeches. Strike the wrong note, and you are landed with an image that may be滑稽的, pompous, overbearing, or all three. Nothing symbolised the Soviet Union more than those grim visages on the Kremlin wall, the strutting steps and the lumbering hardware. It can cloak tyranny in absurd pretension: as at the court of dictators such as Bokassa or Mobutu. It can be graceful, as at the Elysée Palace, or fusty, like the Vatican. Or it can, when everything slots into place, be just right, like the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. "How, but in custom and in ceremony/Are innocence and beauty born?" wrote W.B. Yeats.

Ceremony is one of the things the British are meant to be good at, and on July 1 comes a great occasion which cries out for it. Only this time, instead of careful planning, signs are beginning to emerge that we may make a mess of it. The opening of the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh is a constitutional milestone. The ceremony to mark it should be a gesture of confidence in the future, a recognition of the history and identity of a nation, and of partnership within the United Kingdom. It should arouse the enthusiasm and, if possible, the enjoyment of the people. But with just five months to go, there seems to be no clear idea of what should be done to convey these various messages.

The traditional elements in most great Scottish ceremonies — the Royal Company of Archers, the Lord Lyon King of Arms, the heralds, the Lord High Constable, the Church and the judiciary — have heard nothing of what, if anything, they are required to do. The Army, police and staff of the royal household are awaiting firm instructions. The RAF, which was planning a flypast of Tornados, does not know whether they will be taking to the skies or not. Scottish Office ministers seem to be racked with indecision, with the "Roundheads" arguing for a plain and simple ceremony devoid of "friffy", and the "Cavaliers" pointing out that this should be a day of colour and ritual.

The ministers' job is not made any easier by the remodelling of the Royal Family. The one certainty is that the Queen will open the new Parliament. But she is said to be anxious not to import too much pomp and circumstance. Since she will be required to travel from the Palace of Holyroodhouse up the Royal Mile to the



Magnus Linklater

comment@the-times.co.uk

'We can't even stop paintball games being held in our local woods because of some directive from Whitehall'

Michael Fallon

Conservatism should be small-minded. There was always something desperate about John Major's search for the big idea, as if a great political philosophy could be revivified by a simple slogan.

Forget the big idea. Let's have some medium-sized ideas that will fit local needs and awaken local loyalties. William Hague arrives in New York today. He will see what devotion to the lowest level has done to revitalise schools in deprived areas, and how local provision of welfare in Texas can trump anything the centralised state can offer.

True Conservatism lies far beyond London SW1, out in our towns, villages and shires. To refresh itself the Tory party has to reconnect with the deeper instincts of a country that has never recognised the moral superiority of Whitehall.

Take education. We failed on grant-maintained schools because we didn't create enough of them. But we also failed because that which we let go in the funding of schools, we clawed back centrally on the curriculum. Why should pupils be denied five days' schooling a year because of the absurd "Baker" training days, which cost £140 million a year? Why not give head teachers the money and let them choose between books and training?

Halt the flood of directives from the Education Department and let schools be different. Let them, for example, set their own hours. Why is every state school closed on Saturday morning? Wouldn't just one of our 24,000 schools choose longer hours if head teachers had the freedom to set their own pay? Instead David Blunkett sends them a 42-page document, prescribing four separate sets of technical standards.

Take policing. Why should the Home Secretary, in London decide the length of a police baton in Liverpool? Why shouldn't forces fix local priorities and justify them? The excuse is Home Office regulations, but we should have more local discretion.

And benefits. Welfare has been overnationalised. Local hospitals or healthcare groups should be offered the disability budget for their area and let to assess and distribute the funds according to actual need, not to set formulae. Then they could keep the money they save. Until people get a feel for their local welfare budget, we'll never get real pressure for reform. If we could see what is being paid out, town by town, district by district, local people would complain about the waste and fraud and demand action.

Then there are the roads. Why should districts be hamstrung by Whitehall rules on speed limits? If my villages in Kent want to clamp down on speed, let them. If the police will not take speeding seriously, let local councils hand out fines and keep the revenue. They could then spend the money on noise mitigation.

Take planning. Why shouldn't parishes decide on signs in their conservation areas? My own parish council in Ickle Hill cannot even rule on an application to stage paintball games because of some statutory instrument handed down from Whitehall.

And when it comes to housing, neither party has a clue how to control benefit. The annual budget should be tendered out to the leading local housing associations, which could tailor the

benefit to the local housing market.

Of course we Tories centralised too much. In many cases we had to because it was the only way to set national standards so that comparisons could be made. We're clearing up the shambles that we inherited from the last Labour Government. But the result was to further alienate local communities from their own institutions. Grant-maintained schools and NHS trusts should have helped to refresh localism; instead they were seen as branch offices of Whitehall.

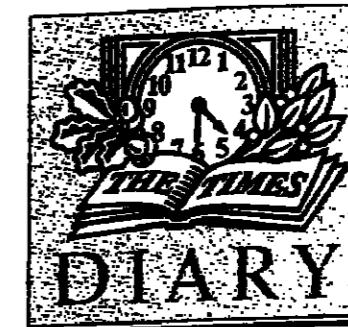
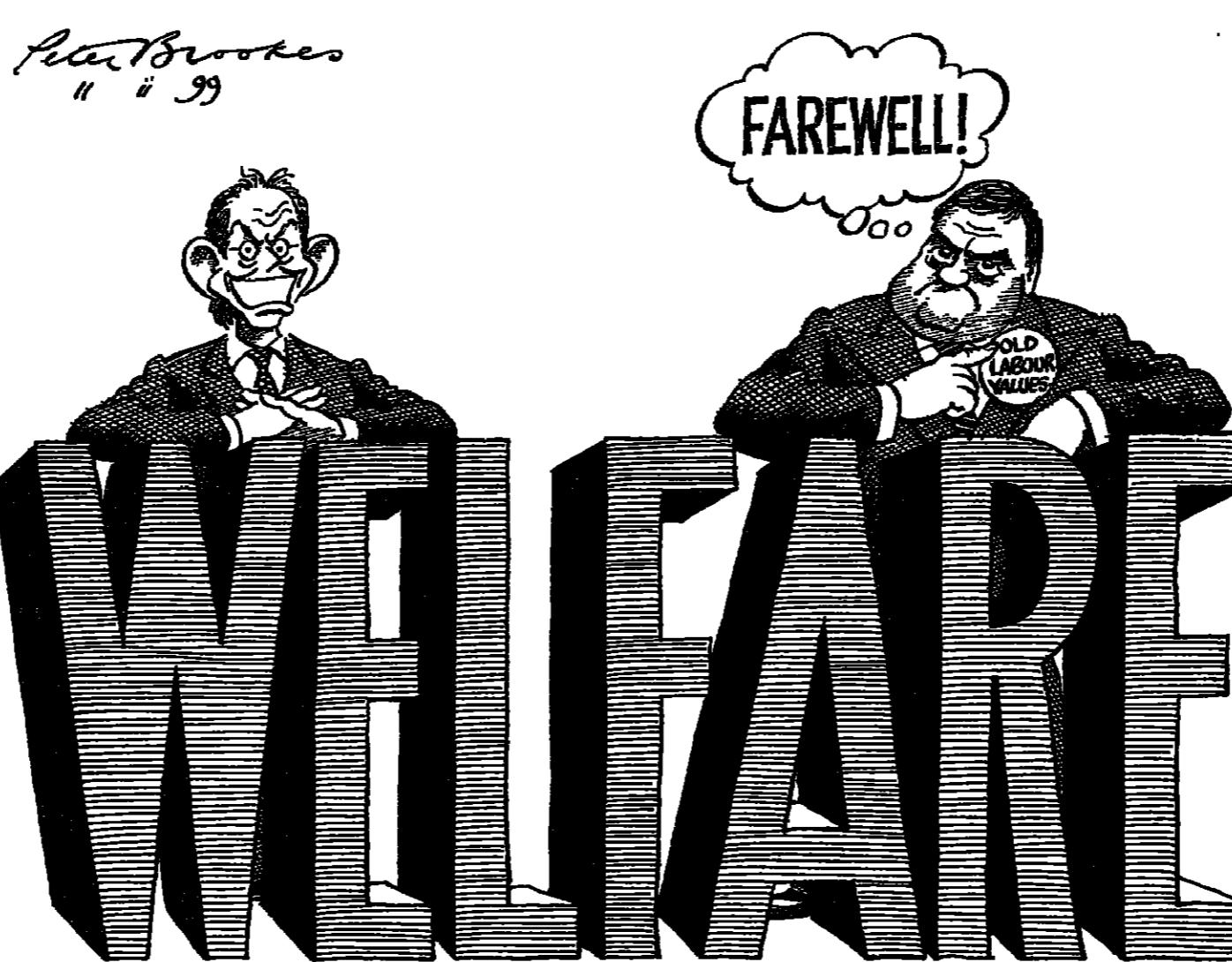
Are you proud of your local library? Conservatives write to me about the lack of choice in Swanley Library, run by Kent council. Others write to me to complain about how long they had to wait in hospital. We don't have local institutions that accept real responsibility.

That's what we need to reverse. And we need to accept that local provision will vary. In some counties you'll get away with spending; in others your school will stay open until 5pm or 6pm. Some towns will be more generous with benefits — but finding work in Barrow is a lot harder than in Berkshire. In some areas, it might be harder to get planning permission or to park.

Bur the prize would be a richer variety, delivered without pages of Whitehall regulations or the ubiquitous "guidance". Councils would do things differently and learn from one another.

And we would see real local institutions again — schools, hospitals and even town halls that command the loyalty and affection of their communities. Local price, perhaps, or is that just a pithy slogan?

The author is MP for Sevenoaks.



Away match

KARMA and karma is calling Glenn Hoddle. The defrocked England manager is being wood by India to lead it to the promised land — the World Cup. After fevered lobbying, Uma Bharati, the Indian Sports Minister, is considering approaching the turbulent coach.

In Delhi, bold spiritual claims are respected. The Rev Glenn's belief in reincarnation is considered highly compatible with the majority Hindu faith. This, rather than England's uneven performance in France 98, seems to have impressed sub-continentals sorts.

"India, where belief in karma and reincarnation originated, should offer Hoddle the job," runs a letter passing round the ministry. Bharati is interested privately, while expressing support for the incumbent, Syed Naveemuddin, in time-honoured football fashion.

The Indian team has even been thrashed by Uzbekistan. As Michael Owen ponders how to spend £1.5 million a year in Liverpool, India's silkies ballsmiths take £40 a week — enough for a lot of karma.

• A NEW variation of leaves on the line by Railtrack: "discriminatory signalling". Not very PC.

Court drama

TONY BLAIR'S hidden brother has found notoriety — not as a £400,000-a-year commercial barrier nor as the PM's only sibling — but as a dead ringer for all-American



can action man, Gene Hackman. But William Blair, QC, right, is not impressed with his new fame and prefers to keep his briefs private.

• A LOST manuscript of a feature-length film of the Magic Roundabout has been found in an attic by Phyllida Law. Emma Thompson's mum, Dougal and the Blue Cat by the late Eric Thompson features the usual suspects, such as Zebbedee, in all its psychedelic glory, and the script is to be published.

Love's muse

HAS Tony Harrison, shortlisted to be Poet Laureate, outed his secret lover in a new verse? While denouncing the position of Laureate, Harrison writes in passing about how he needs his girlfriend: "It was in this Stratford bookshop that I heard/Ted died, and needed my lover, stuck on stage/a Queen Elizabeth in Richard III/to help me not to brood/I'm near Ted's age/While my lover had to do two Richard II's/I went to bed and read from front to back/all those four vols of Gray and found/these words: the saponaceous qualities of sack." Who is the mystery woman? The celebrated Sir Thomas is playing the part in Richard III. I trust the hint went down all right with Harrison's second wife, the soprano Teresa Stratas.



• HARRODS toilors are so honest. After a jewellery show, small going Home presents were given to departing guests. Raine Countess Spencer, the director of Harrods International, declined. "I'd better not. I'm staff," she shrilled.

Jack snaps

JACK STRAW is growing precious. The Home Secretary was very cross when he spotted a researcher from Tory Central Office at the launch of the Asylum and Immigration Bill. Straw called Sir Norman Fowler to demand he remove his spawn. Fowler promptly paged the bemused girl to suggest she leave the gathering post haste. But as Labour used to creep into Tory briefings, and the girl signed in as a Tory, why did Jack get heavy?

JASPER GERARD



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 10: His Excellency Dr Beyene Negewo was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Credence as Ambassador of Ethiopia to the Court of St James's.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 10: The Prince of Wales, Patron, The General Osteopathic Council, this morning opened the General Osteopathic Council Building, Tower Bridge Road, London.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
February 10: The Princess Royal, President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, today visited the Scottish Apparel Group, Portcullis Place, London, W1.

Her Royal Highness, Patron, The Home Farm Trust, this afternoon attended their Management Board update meeting at Mitsubishi Electric plc, Kilnham Cross, The Strand, London, WC2.

The Bishop of Sodor and Man pronounced the blessing. Members of the family, the Commandant General, Royal Marines, representatives of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Marines Association, Bath, the Royal Marines Reserve, the British Southern Slav Society and many other friends and former colleagues were among those present.

Mr Tom Johnson-Gilbert

A service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Mr Tom Johnson-Gilbert, a former joint Senior Partner of Clifford Chance, Solicitors, was held yesterday at the Church of St Botolph-without-Aldegate, London, EC1. The Rev David Prior officiated. Mr Bill Thomas and Mr Nigel Fox Bassett read lessons.

Sir Michael Kerr, QC, and Sir Max Williams gave addresses.

The Clifford Chance choir sang during the service.

Today's royal engagements

The Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, will present the Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education at Buckingham Palace at 11.00. The Princess Royal, as Chancellor, London University, will attend.

Prince Edward, patron, will attend the London Mozart Players' 50th anniversary concert in the Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, at 6.30.

The Princess Royal will open the Adolescent Unit of the Middlesex Hospital, Mortimer Street, London, W1, at 2.00.

Princess Margaret, will visit the Peckham Settlement, Goldsmith Road, London SE15, at 3.00.

The Duke of Kent, patron, British Computer Society, will attend the BCS Information Technology Awards 1998 at the Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1, at 6.30.

Church news

The Ven Peter William Wheatey, Archdeacon of Hertford, has been appointed to the Suffragan See of Edmonton (London Diocese), in succession to the Right Rev Brian John Masters.

Life of Major-General Robert B. Loudoun, Royal Marines, which was held in The Abbey Church of St Peter and St Paul, Bath, today.

Princess Alexandra, the Hon Lady Ogilvy was represented by Lady Thompson at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Major-General Robert Beverley Loudoun held yesterday in Bath Abbey.

Prebendary Richard Askew, Rector, officiated, assisted by the Rev A.A. Braithwaite, Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore read the lesson. Mr Steven Loudoun, son, read from the works of Isaac Pergamon, Mr Robin Loudoun, son, read from *The Prophet* by Kahil Gibran and Miss Louisa Loudoun, grand-daughter, recited the works of John Masefield. General Sir Ian Gourlay gave an address.

The Bishop of Sodor and Man pronounced the blessing. Members of the family, the Commandant General, Royal Marines, representatives of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Marines Association, Bath, the Royal Marines Reserve, the British Southern Slav Society and many other friends and former colleagues were among those present.

Mr Tom Johnson-Gilbert

A service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Mr Tom Johnson-Gilbert, a former joint Senior Partner of Clifford Chance, Solicitors, was held yesterday at the Church of St Botolph-without-Aldegate, London, EC1. The Rev David Prior officiated. Mr Bill Thomas and Mr Nigel Fox Bassett read lessons.

Sir Michael Kerr, QC, and Sir Max Williams gave addresses.

The Clifford Chance choir sang during the service.

Dr Alexander Cooke

A memorial service for Dr Alexander Macdougall Cooke will be held in Merton College Chapel, Oxford, on Saturday, February 20, 1999, at 2.30pm.

William Servaes

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Bill Servaes will take place at St Mary's Church, Bryson Square, London, W1, on Tuesday, March 2, 1999, at noon.

Appointments in HM Forces

Royal Air Force

H.G. Mackay - HQ STC, 12.99; R.L. Dixon - HQ 11/18 GP, 8.29; L.A. Doble - MOD, 12.99.

GROUP CAPTAIN

T. Kirby - HQ STC, 12.99; P.D.J. Turner - HQ PTC, 12.99; N.B. Spiller - HQ STC, 8.29; J.C. Plant - MOD, 12.99.

Wing Commander

G.J. Howard - OC TSW RAF Stafford, 11.99; A.J.R. Davenport, GP Capt Log 5 HOSTC, 16.99; R.S. Smith - OC HQ Land Wilton, 8.199.

Memorial services

Major-General R.B. Loudoun

The Duke of Edinburgh, Captain General of the Royal Marines, was represented by Major-General A.M. Keeling and Princess Alexandra, Patron of the Mental Health Foundation, was represented by Lady Thompson at a service of thanksgiving for the life of Major-General Robert Beverley Loudoun held yesterday in Bath Abbey.

Prebendary Richard Askew, Rector, officiated, assisted by the Rev A.A. Braithwaite, Major-General Sir Jeremy Moore read the lesson. Mr Steven Loudoun, son, read from the works of Isaac Pergamon, Mr Robin Loudoun, son, read from *The Prophet* by Kahil Gibran and Miss Louisa Loudoun, grand-daughter, recited the works of John Masefield. General Sir Ian Gourlay gave an address.

The Bishop of Sodor and Man pronounced the blessing. Members of the family, the Commandant General, Royal Marines, representatives of the Royal British Legion, the Royal Marines Association, Bath, the Royal Marines Reserve, the British Southern Slav Society and many other friends and former colleagues were among those present.

Mr Tom Johnson-Gilbert

A service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Mr Tom Johnson-Gilbert, a former joint Senior Partner of Clifford Chance, Solicitors, was held yesterday at the Church of St Botolph-without-Aldegate, London, EC1. The Rev David Prior officiated. Mr Bill Thomas and Mr Nigel Fox Bassett read lessons.

Sir Michael Kerr, QC, and Sir Max Williams gave addresses.

The Clifford Chance choir sang during the service.

Birthdays today

Sir Ronald Arculus, former diplomat, 76; Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Berger, 74; Professor Marilyn Butler, Rector, Exeter College, Oxford, 62; Brigadier Iain Cameron, 60; Dr Timothy Chambers, paediatrician, 53; Mr C.H. Dearmyer, organist, 69; Mr Patrick Leigh Fermor, author, 84; Sir Archibald Forster, former chairman, Eso, UK, 71; Sir Vivian Fuchs, FRS, former director, British Antarctic Survey, 91; Mr Hans-Georg Gadamer, philosopher, 99.

Mr Michael Jackson, Chief Executive, Channel 4, 41; General Sir Jeremy Mackenzie, 58; Mr Steve McManaman, footballer, 26; Mr Leslie Nielsen, actor, 73; Miss Mary Quant, fashion designer, 65; Mr Bert Reynolds, actor, 63; Mr Michael Sherrill, 70; Sir Patrick Miles Seller, 70; Dennis Skinner, MP, 67; Mr John Surtees, former motorcycle and motor racing champion, 65; Mr E.W. Swanton, author and sports commentator, 92; Miss Mary Tregear, FBA, ornamental art historian, 75; Mr Malcolm Walker, chairman and chief executive, Iceland Frozen Foods, 53.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Rod Buttress was the principal guest and a speaker at the Annual dinner held last night at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Mr Barry Jackson, president, dental students, 2000, was in the chair and the Secretary of State for Health also spoke.

Savoy Gastronomes

The Committee of the Savoy Gastronomes were the hosts at a dinner held last night in London in honour of Mr David Ward the retiring chairman.

Appointment

Ambassador to Egypt

Mr Graham Boyce has been appointed Ambassador to Egypt, from early summer, in succession to Sir David Blatherwick who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service.



The first female musicians with the Welsh Guards, Lucy Ellis, 24, from Tywyn, North Wales, with the French horn, and flautist Joanna Williams, 19, from Builth Wells, Mid Wales, at Wellington Barracks, London, yesterday

Luncheons

Middle East Association

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was the guest of honour and speaker at the annual luncheon of the Middle East Association held yesterday at the London Hilton on Park Lane. Mr Richard Owens, chairman of the executive committee of the association, presided. Sir James Craig, president, also spoke.

Guild of Sports Internationalists

Ms Michele Verroken, Director of the UK Sports Council on Ethics and Anti-Doping, was the guest speaker at a luncheon of the Guild of Sports Internationalists held yesterday at War Chancery Hall.

During the luncheon Mr Terry Moul, Master, presented a charitable donation to Mr Paul Anderson, Director of the Special Olympics UK.

Dinners

Royal College of Surgeons

Rod Buttress was the principal guest and a speaker at the Annual dinner held last night at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Mr Barry Jackson, president, dental students, 2000, was in the chair and the Secretary of State for Health also spoke.

Savoy Gastronomes

The Committee of the Savoy Gastronomes were the hosts at a dinner held last night in London in honour of Mr David Ward the retiring chairman.

Appointment

Ambassador to Egypt

Mr Graham Boyce has been appointed Ambassador to Egypt, from early summer, in succession to Sir David Blatherwick who will be retiring from the Diplomatic Service.

Anniversaries

Northaw School

The Northaw School [now Norman Court Preparatory School] is updating its roll of former pupils. Please would all Old Northawians and Northawianas, of whatever vintage, get in touch directly with Denis Blake [Headmaster 1973-89] at Yew Tree House, Charlton All Saints, Salisbury, SP5 4HQ. We need to know your present address - and names, please - so that the ONA Association can be re-founded, enlarged and modernised.

Lecture

Plumbers' Company

Dr Neil Summerlin, Director of the Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics and Society, and Dr Peter Warren, Director of the World Humanity Trust, were the speakers at the Plumbers' Company annual lecture held yesterday at the One Great George Street Conference Centre, London SW1.

Mr Edward Hopkinson, Master, presided.

Deaths

CHARLTON

- On February 8th 1998 John George of Bruton, Somerset after a brief illness, aged 81 years. Son of Mrs and Stephen, and the late Tommy. Funeral service to take place at St John the Baptist's church, Charlton, on Tuesday 16th February at 2pm. Family flowers only, donations in lieu for the Royal Voluntary Service.

ESSEX - Maurice passed peacefully on Friday 7th February, 1998, aged 91, born on the same day 1908. Much loved husband to Rose, father to Terry and Peter and grandfather to Phil, grandchild and great-grandfather. Sadly missed but never forgotten. Any donations to Amnesty International.

GOSS - Commander David Lawrence Cobb CVO RN, on 2nd January 1998, in Australia, much loved brother, uncle and grandfather. Funeral service at 12 noon on Saturday 6th March at the Queen's Chapel in the Guildhall, London, EC2, to be followed by a service at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, London, WC2, to 2pm. Friends and family are welcome. Donations if desired to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Project, University Shipyard, Barbican, Green, Southampton, Hants SO1 2ZD.

BRITON - Dr Joan [Judy] M., beloved wife of Hubert and mother of John, Clerc, Theresa, Christopher and Linda, died peacefully on 9th February 1998 after a long illness, aged 74.

Funeral at St Edmund's Church, Leatherhead, Surrey, 12 noon

FEARNSIDE - Family flowers only. Donations to the Royal Voluntary Service.

CONRADY - Peacefully on February 8th 1998, Doris aged 94 years, daughter of the late F.W. and Mrs C. Conrady, former Head of the Royal Flying Corps, 1918.

Requiem Mass at St Peter's Church, Eastgate, Gloucester, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon. Private cremation.

FRENCH BLAKE - Carolyn on 9th February 1998. Doris aged 49. Much loved wife of Michael and mother of Robert and Clare. Funeral private.

GRIFFIN - Charles Frederick, 76, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Memorial Service at St Peter's Church, Dinton, Wiltshire, 2.30 pm.

JARVIS - Anthony John [Tony] passed away on 9th February 1998, aged 75, greatly loved husband, brother, father and grandfather. C.P. in the Royal Engineers, 1947-1967.

Requiem Mass at St Peter's Church, Dinton, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon. Private cremation.

LEUNG - Anthony Ting Chu, Doctor, suddenly on 7th February, devoted husband of Anna, loving father of Daniel, and grandfather of Amabel. Much loved and greatly missed by all his family and friends.

MCINTYRE - Cyril Lt Col (Ret'd) King George V Own Gurkha Rifles, died in London, 12th February 1998.

ROTHAMSTELL - John Rothamstell, 80, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Memorial Service at All Saints Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon. Private cremation.

WILLIAMS - Lynne aged 14, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WHEELER - Molly aged 16, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

WILSON - John Wilson, 81, died peacefully on 9th February 1998. Funeral service at St Michael's Church, Caversham, on Saturday 14th February at 12 noon.

OBITUARIES

SIR ASHLEY BRAMALL

Sir Ashley Bramall, Leader of the Inner London Education Authority, 1970-81, and Labour MP for Bedeley, 1946-50, died yesterday aged 83. He was born on January 6, 1916.

Ashley Bramall was a man whose early political career held great promise. He was chairman of the Oxford University Labour Club at 22, treasurer of the Oxford Union at 23, a parliamentary Labour candidate at 29 and an MP at 30.

In the House of Commons an opportunity which most aspiring politicians would immediately have seized soon came his way. He was offered the job of parliamentary private secretary to Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary. He turned it down. There were aspects of Bevin's policy on Israel which he thought misguided.

In 1950, at the age of 34, he was out of Parliament, beaten by Edward Heath at the February general election of that year. The majority against him was just 133 votes. Despite three further attempts (at Bedeley in 1951 and 1959 and at Watford in 1955), he was never to return to the House of Commons.

To his own side he was at times something of an enigma. Fairness in political decisions came close to being an article of faith. Pragmatism, flexibility and compromise were considered, only to be dismissed. Party loyalty might be maintained in public but at private meetings he could be scathing at any hint of fudge. His speeches were delivered in a strong, forthright voice but they did not have appeal for mass audiences.

Ernest Ashley Bramall was the elder of the two children of Major Edmund Bramall and his wife Katharine Westby (his younger brother by eight years, Edwin, rose to Field Marshal Lord Bramall, the former Chief of the Defence Staff). The two brothers made a unique family contribution to the official life of London. Sir Ashley was chairman of the Greater London Council, 1982-83, while his younger brother was Lord Lieutenant of Greater London, 1986-98.

The Bramalls' forebears were in the Egyptian cotton trade. Ashley Bramall's grandfather was a wealthy merchant with a home in Belgravian. Ashley's father, Major Bramall, suffered from poor health for much of his later life and his wife, a woman of much drive and imagination, started up some small businesses. One was a garage which sold and serviced only yellow Rolls-Royce motor cars. She was one of the ardent early socialists, long before it was either fashionable or socially acceptable to be so. Still taking a keen interest in politics and a great pride in her sons, she lived to be 97.

Ashley Bramall went to Gibbs Preparatory School in Sloane Street, which was particularly strong in teaching mathematics and also in developing its boys as swimmers. From there he went to Westminster, soon leaving for Canford, the Westminster School doctor having advised a



Bramall: fairness in political decisions was an article of faith

move to the country for health reasons. (His younger brother went to Eton.) From Canford he went up to Magdalen College, Oxford. He came down with a second in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and read for the Bar at the Inner Temple.

In 1939 he joined the Northamptonshire Yeomanry and later was transferred to the Reconnaissance Corps before being posted to the Staff College. Languages were always a strong suit with him. He knew German well and spoke it fluently. (A love of music had taken him to Germany on holidays before the war.) When the British zone of Germany was established after the war, he was one of those involved in re-creating trade unions under the military government.

Fighting the "bread rationing" by-election at Bedeley took him out of the Army, in which he had become a major, in June 1946. The result of the by-election — a drop in its majority from nearly 12,000 to 1,800 — was a shock to Labour. But Bramall was thought to have done well to hold the seat in very difficult circumstances.

His law studies, disrupted by the war, were taken up again by the new MP, and he was called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1949. Housing became a special interest and, once he entered local government, this proved to be useful. In 1959 he was appointed an alderman on the Westminster City Council where he was leader of the Labour opposition. In 1961 there began a 27-year membership of the London County Council and its successor, the Greater London Council.

His biggest contribution to Labour

Party politics probably lay in his leadership of the Inner London Education Authority from 1970 to 1981. In the metropolis this body had at that time under its charge some 360,000 children and adults in education, several hundred schools plus special colleges and teachers' institutes. The leadership was unpaid and as near full-time for successive incumbents as the chief education officer could make it.

The priority for Bramall was speeding up the merging of comprehensive and grammar schools. He passionately believed that this, more than anything else, would raise the education horizons of the average child.

When Bramall took over, there were 35,000 children in the authority's schools who did not speak English as a first language and 128 different languages were spoken in the schools.

This was because of immigration from the Indian sub-continent and the Caribbean in the previous two decades. He sought to increase the quality of education for these pupils by employing a larger number of teachers and specialist staff. This pushed costs well beyond the national average in state schools but Bramall was only too keenly aware that, unless these children left school with marketable skills, they could spend a lifetime on social security.

He could at times be tough in ways that angered the Left. During a financial crisis in 1979 he called for a £25 million cut from the authority's proposed budget and lost the vote 27-26. He won a subsequent vote for the same cut, while managing to leave intact three things nearest his heart:

the pupil-teacher ratio, nursery education and meals for the very needs.

Bramall had corporal punishment abolished after he became Leader of the ILEA. An earlier attempt several years before had been frustrated by the then Education Secretary, the former headmaster Edward Short (now Lord Glenarthur), who told Bramall bluntly that such a decision was for teachers, not politicians.

The hard Left reached the peak of its power in London as the result of the GLC elections of 1981 and Bramall was a recocent victim. Less than 24 hours after the polls closed the Labour caucus had replaced Andrew McIntosh (now Lord McIntosh of Haringey, Deputy Government Chief Whip in the Lords) with Ken Livingstone. Next day Bryan Davies, a young TUC researcher, replaced Bramall as leader of London's education organisation.

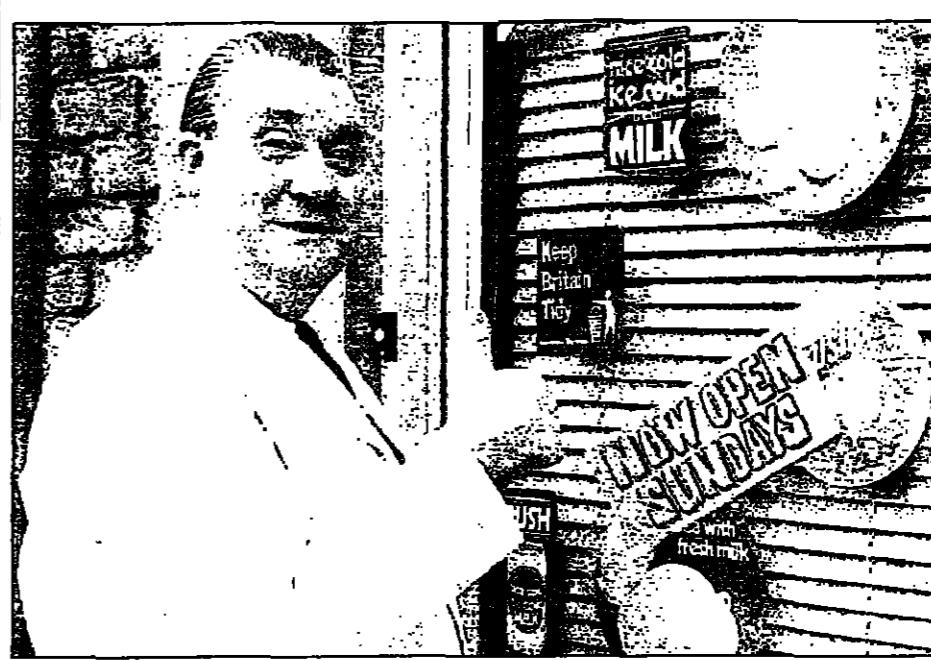
Bramall's severe removal caused such consternation that the following year he was invited by Livingstone to stand for the chairmanship of the Greater London Council, to which he was elected unopposed. A year later he was invited to stand for the chairmanship of the Inner London Education Authority, which he also won (having been chairman once before, in 1965-67). He was honoured nationally by being elected chairman of the Council of Education Authorities, 1975-76. For five years he was also leader of the employers' side of the Burnham Committee which sets teachers' pay in primary and secondary schools. He was knighted in 1975.

After he finished with active politics he kept up his wide interests both in the arts and education. He was chairman of the National Council for Drama Training, honorary secretary of the Theatres Advisory Council, a governor of the Museum of London, a member of the council of governors of Pimlico School and, until last week, chairman of the Westminster College of Further Education.

Ashley Bramall achieved something that is difficult. He grew old gracefully. Slim, distinguished-looking, with elegant features he had a thick mop of wavy silver hair and always looked younger than his years. Despite the eight years' age difference between them, he was close to his brother, the Field Marshal. Lord Bramall always enjoyed telling the story of how, in the House of Lords, a newly ennobled Tory peer had once come up to him to say that he had been at staff college with his son. "Not my son," responded the former Chief of the Defence Staff. "That was my elder brother."

Ashley Bramall was married twice — first, in 1939, to Margaret Taylor, whom he met at Oxford, (she later became director of the National Council for One-Parent Families). He married, secondly, Gery Bloch in 1950 who later joined him in the Labour group on Westminster City Council. There were two sons of the first marriage and one of the second. They and his wife survive him.

BRYAN MOSLEY



Sunday opening for Alf Roberts: daring developments on Coronation Street in 1989

Bryan Mosley, OBE, *Coronation Street* actor, died of a heart attack on February 9 aged 67. He was born in Leeds on August 25, 1931.

"I'D LIKE Alf Roberts to burst into the Rovers with a sword in hand and swing dramatically across the bar on a chandelier," Bryan Mosley once said wistfully. It was a remark which confessed to an early fascination with the swashbuckling roles of Errol Flynn, who had been one of Mosley's boyhood heroes.

But though Mosley was no mean stunt-fight swordsman himself, and had arranged many a stage combat for others, his dream scenario was not to be. Instead, his Alf Roberts, grocer and councilor, who was grow stolid old in a career of useful public service — one of those diligent and trustworthy functionaries who are the mainstay of small northern towns.

But there were plus sides to this steady deportment. Alf's bank balance and his position in the fictional Weatherfield community, if not his looks — an increasingly portly head topped by repulsive Brylcreamed locks — made him quite a wot with the ladies. He had already been twice married and twice widowed when, in 1965, he was snapped up to the altar for the third and last time by the frisky Audrey Potter, played by Sue Nicholls.

True, Audrey was flirting furiously with the local butcher, Fred Elliott, behind Alf's back at the very same party

during which Alf died on screen. But there were compensations for Alf in having such a sexy companion to spark up his declining years. And if his wallet was considerably the lighter for such attentions, he learnt not to complain.

Like most "soap" actors, Bryan Mosley had a good grounding in the conventional theatre after training at the Esme Church Northern Theatre School. After National Service in the RAF he had wide experience of rep in the North of England.

But television was to be his métier and he was in on the ground floor when the medium began expanding as a vehicle for serious and popular drama from the 1950s onwards. He was in a number of *Armchair Theatre* and *Play of the Week* productions and outside his *Coronation Street* work was a familiar and recurrent face to devotees of *Z Cars*, *The Avengers*, *The Saint* and *Doctor Who*.

He had his moments in films, too, with small roles in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *A Kind of Loving* and *Charlie Bubbles*. In *Get Carter* (1971), Mike Hodges' stark screen version of Ted Lewis' novel of Northern gangland life Jack's *Return Home*, he displayed memorably sinister qualities as a Newcastle thug who threatens the protagonist, Michael Caine — until Caine throws him off a roof.

But 1961 was his *annus mirabilis*, launching him into the role with which he was to become totally identified in the public mind over the next 37 years. The very embodiment

of unexciting provincial stolidity, Alf Roberts became one of television's most famous shopkeepers, serving twice as Mayor of Weatherfield, once with the Rovers Return barmaid Annie Walker as his Lady Mayoress.

After the death of his first *Coronation Street* wife, Phyllis, in 1972, Alf was given the runaround by the flighty Donna Parker, before finding salvation from her predatory (and financially debilitating) advances in marriage to Renée Bradshaw, in 1978. She, too, was to die, killed in a car crash two years later, and it was with a sense of relief that Alf's fans saw him eventually firmly enmeshed in the toils of the glamorous (if expensive) Audrey Potter. They fell into each other's arms after she had crashed his sports car.

Surprisingly contrite in the face of his subsequent wrath (ie dissolving into wet-timed floods of tears which were immensely flattering to his male ego) she received the accolade of a ring — and the front keys to his house — in December 1988. Mosley was appointed OBE that year.

Alf, always overweight and now companion to a younger and vigorous consort, died of a heart attack in an armchair just as the clock struck midnight last New Year's Eve.

The real-life Bryan Mosley had also had a number of health scares over the years, and eventually had his fatal heart attack while out shopping in Shipley, Yorkshire.

He is survived by his wife Norma and by their three sons and three daughters.

PERSONAL COLUMN

WANTED	FOR SALE
VIDEO Required of 1930s musical with Jessie Matthews. Tel 01865 265 645	A BRITISH Newspaper Original. Superbly bound. Postage £20. Tel 01865 706 607.

TICKETS FOR SALE

ACCESS TICKETS World Wide Sports, Tennis, Football, Boxing & Pop Concerts. Tel 0171 821 6416 All Areas
ALL AVAIL. ALL PLACES. All Pop, Vap, Movie, Pictures, Art, Theatre, Rugby & Sport. Tel 0171 826 0781

CHEAP! IN LONDON. Pictures, Cinema, Shows, Restaurants, Bars, Pubs, Clubs, Art Galleries, etc. Tel 0171 826 0585
--

Five Nations. Cheap. Big Show. World Cup. Cricket. World Cup. All Grand Prix. Football. Lewis, Lewis & Lewis. Tel 0171 574 0274

HORSES. Tickets available all Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays. Tel 0171 722 7052
--

WANTED urgently. England. V. Sudden. Emergency. Police. Top. Pictures. Photo. Discarded. Tel 0171 225 0065
--

WANTED please read this advert. Debtor's debts, any amount. Tel 01865 706 645

ALL TICKETS 5 NATIONS RUGBY RUGBY W/CUP ROYAL ASCOT CRICKET W/CUP WIMBLEDON '99 SPORT, THEATRE & CONCERTS BOOKING NOW! 0171 283 5050 ALL CREDITCARDS ACCEPTED

CORPORATE HOSPITALITY ALL TICKETS 5 NATIONS WORLD CUP GRAND PRIX FOOTBALL ASCOT CRICKET TEL 01865 443948
--

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COURT & SOCIAL

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGES

Please see Court page announcements by post/fix to: Mrs J Norman, Court & Social Advertising, The Times, PO Box 495, Virginia Road, NW1 2HS. Tel 0171 782 7497 Fax 0171 782 7725

Please include in all correspondence a signature of either one of the parties concerned or a parent, a daytime and home telephone number and address.

Advertisements for the Court page must be received two working days prior to publication and are accepted subject to confirmation.

Advertising Rate is £17.94 per line inc VAT.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

TO PLACE NOTICES IN THESE SECTIONS PLEASE

Telephone 0171 680 6878 Fax 0171 782 7930 Or Email tntfeatures@newsint.co.uk

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

PROFESSOR ROGER WALKER

Professor Roger Walker, Professor of Spanish at Birkbeck College, University of London, died on January 11 aged 60. He was born on July 25, 1938.

Over the past thirty years, Birkbeck College has produced more than its share of distinguished Hispanists. Roger Walker, with his wide scholarly interests and outstanding administrative service, was among the best.

Roger Michael Walker graduated from Manchester University in 1960 with a first in French and Spanish. After a year of postgraduate study he was appointed to Bristol University, and then, in 1963, he joined Birkbeck's Spanish department. At Bristol he obtained his doctorate for a thesis on the *Teatro de la Comedia* of Lope de Rueda and subsequently taught at the University of Nottingham, the University of East Anglia and the University of Kent at Canterbury. He then moved to the University of Edinburgh, where he was appointed to the Chair of Spanish in 1970. He remained at Edinburgh until 1974 when he moved to the University of Nottingham, where he was appointed to the Chair of Spanish in 1974. He remained at Nottingham until 1974 when he moved to the University of Nottingham, where he was appointed to the Chair of Spanish in 1974. He remained at Nottingham until 1974 when he moved to the University of Nottingham, where he was appointed to the Chair of Spanish in 1974. He remained at Nottingham until 1974 when he moved to the University of Nottingham, where he was appointed to the Chair of Spanish in 1974. He remained at Nottingham until 1974 when he moved to the University of Nottingham, where he was appointed to the Chair of Spanish in 1974. He remained

THE TIMES TODAY

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 1999

NEWS

Economy heads to recession

■ Britain will move perilously close to recession over the next few months, the Bank of England admitted as it predicted that growth would be "close to zero" for the first half of this year. Even after that, it expects growth to reach only 0.5 to 1 per cent for 1999 as a whole. The predictions were coupled with a promise to go on cutting rates but Tories accused the Government of driving the economy to the brink of recession..... Page 1

Briton saves avalanche victims

■ A British man risked his life to pull three people to safety from the debris of a chalet ripped from its foundations by the avalanche in the French Alps that claimed 10 lives. Mike Cooper, 48, who has worked as a trail guide in Chamonix for 12 years, used a sledgehammer to smash through eight inches of concrete and then squeezed through the hole..... Pages 1, 5

Gibraltar crisis

Gibraltar was thrown back to the siege of Franco's days when Spain announced that it would ban all drivers with a Gibraltar licence and threatened to stop all flights to the Rock..... Page 1

Viagra savings

Impotence sufferers are saving money on Viagra. Instead of buying pills with the lowest doses, they are buying the strongest and chopping them up..... Page 9

Cost of a QC

Barristers who are promoted to Queen's Counsel are earning an average of £250,000 a year. The time they are appointed..... Page 10

Aids trial

The gulf separating French citizens from the Parisian elite appeared wider than ever as former ministers began giving evidence in their trial for manslaughter in connection with France's contaminated blood scandal..... Page 14

Nazi links

The United Nations and Western intelligence agencies are investigating a link between leading members of South Africa's neo-Nazi movement and President Taylor of Liberia..... Page 15

Not amused

Europe's royal families have started to distance themselves from the International Olympic Committee..... Page 16

Pension victory

Two pensioners who accused the electricity industry of raiding their pension funds have won a legal battle..... Page 7

Sex shocker

A former marriage guidance counsellor shortlisted for the Romantic Novelist of the Year award said that some of her clients' tales were too unbelievable even for her genre..... Page 8

Killer may save a nation

■ The return of 'Willy' the killer whale to Iceland may save one of Europe's most prosperous nations from bankruptcy. For as Keiko is trained for release into the Arctic Icelanders are constantly reminded that whales command fierce passions around the world. The huge tourist interest in Keiko's rehabilitation may just stave off resumption of whaling..... Page 13



While most of Europe shivered in the snow yesterday strollers in Estoril, Portugal enjoyed balmy temperatures of 57°F. Page 5

BUSINESS

Merger collapses: A planned £10.7 billion merger between National Power and United Utilities collapsed on Monday night, it emerged yesterday..... Page 25

Mirror offer: Regional Independent Media are planning to make a formal offer for the Mirror Group later this month, at a price that is unlikely to be above 200p..... Page 45

LucasVarity: Federal-Mogul withdrew its bid to acquire LucasVarity, the car components group, leaving the way clear for TRW to buy the company for £4 billion..... Page 25

Markets: The FTSE 100 index fell 9.70 points to 5702. The pound fell 0.77 cents to \$1.6277 and 0.46 cents against the euro to 69.63p. The trade-weighted sterling index fell to 100.0 from 100.6..... Page 28

Cricket: England threw away a good chance of victory over Australia in Sydney in the first match of the final series of the triangular one-day tournament..... Page 48

Rugby union: Kevin Yates, the Bath player who was suspended for an ear-biting incident last year, has been reported for stamping on an opponent..... Page 45

Golf: Nick Faldo must perform well in the Desert Classic in Dubai this weekend to have any chance of qualifying for the World Golf Championship later this year..... Page 42

Sarah Potter: Karren Brady, the managing director of Birmingham City, has won her battle for acceptance in the male dominated world of football..... Page 42

GAY CINEMA

RADIO & TV

Preview: Lifting the ban on ivory. *Horizon* (BBC-2, 9.30pm) Review: Joe Joseph finds heartbreak hitting people like a truck..... Pages 46, 47

Islam's Luther

Twenty years ago an elderly, irascible Muslim cleric returned from 20 years exile and loosed a whirlwind in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution produced a realignment of political forces..... Page 21

Go north, young man

The content of George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" is not suitable for export. If the slogan sounds like his father's call for a "kinder, gentler, America", the detailed provision is not..... Page 21

Faking it

Birds do it, bees do it. President Clinton cannot stop himself doing it but, it seems, many Americans do not. The latest survey from behind America's bedroom door reveals that surprisingly few regularly engage in sex..... Page 21

ANATOLE KALETSKY

Until Europe has a proper democratic constitution, it will be impossible to claim that the interests of voters are represented by commissioners, central bankers and other senior officials..... Page 20

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Ceremony is one of the things the British are meant to be good at, and on July 1 comes a great occasion which cries out for it. Only this time instead of careful planning, signs are beginning to emerge that we may make a mess..... Page 20

MICHAEL FALLON

True Conservatism lies far beyond London SW1, out in our towns and shires. To refresh itself the Tory party has to reconnect with the deeper instincts of a country that has never recognised the moral superiority of Whitehall..... Page 20

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Best buys

An Easter break, with eggs and champagne and falconry, in Kent; cruising or skiing in Norway; New York or Boston for about £150 return for under-26s..... Page 41

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

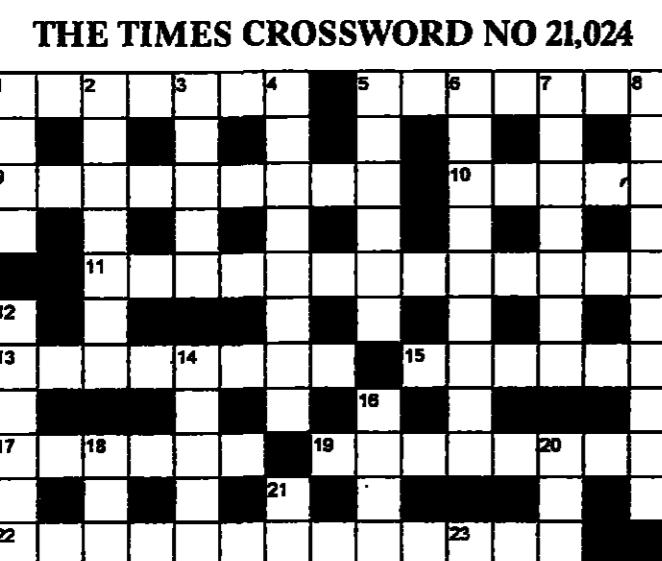
Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

Reviews

Erica Wagner discusses the versatility of Gore Vidal; David Bellamy searches for giant squid; Gerald Jacobs hails the heroes at the heart of the enemy; Roger Scruton looks at the links between music, cosmology and theology; Bel Mooney confronts the fairytale wolf in the darkness..... Pages 38, 39

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,024





BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 1999

Fall in sterling opens way for fresh base rate cut

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE pound slumped yesterday after the Bank of England downgraded its growth forecast for this year and left the way open for further cuts in interest rates.

Sterling fell to \$1.6295 from \$1.6365 in late trading on Tuesday and also slipped against the euro to 0.6950 to

the euro from 0.6903 on Tuesday. The pound ended at 100 on its effective index against a basket of currencies, down from 100.6 at the finish on Tuesday. At one stage it fell to 99.

In its latest quarterly *Inflation Report* the Bank said that it now expects growth this year of between 0.5 per cent and 1 per cent, down from its previous forecast of growth somewhat above 1 per cent.

It said that growth would be near to zero in the first half of this year.

However, the Bank said that the Monetary Policy Committee was not in a monetary policy "pause" after last week's 0.5 per cent cut in base rates to 5.5 per cent. It said that, since its report in November, the world economy had deteriorated, that there had been a more marked slowdown in domestic demand and

that inflationary pressures had eased further.

Despite the hope of further rate cuts to stave off outright recession, London shares closed down for the sixth session in a row, undermined by nerves on Wall Street about the overvaluation of technology stocks. There was also some concern in London about impending bank profits announcements.

The FTSE 100 index closed down 0.7 points at 5,702.0, having dipped below the 5,700 at one point during mid-day trading. Its afternoon recovery came as the Dow Jones Industrial Average registered a gain of more than 50 points after Tuesday's fall of 1.7 per cent that wiped out all of its 1999 gains so far. The Dow then returned to negative territory, posting a loss of nearly 30 points at mid-session.

On British interest rate futures markets traders priced in further rate cuts. Several City economists are predicting that base rates will fall to 4.50 per cent from the 5.50 per cent level reached after last week's cut.

LINKS
WEBSITE: www.bankofengland.co.uk

TRW in line to win £4bn battle for Lucas

By PAUL DURMAN

TRW, the American car components group, looks set to win the battle for LucasVarity last night after Federal-Mogul decided not to top its rival's £4 billion offer.

Federal-Mogul said that, after extensive due diligence, it had decided that acquiring LucasVarity would not make financial sense.

TRW, which makes steering systems and air bags, has made an offer of 28p in cash for each LucasVarity share. The company has hinted that it could afford to offer more because of the synergies seen in combining with LucasVarity, which makes braking, fuel injection and electronic systems.

This made it difficult for Federal-Mogul to come up with a knockout bid. Dick Snell, the Federal-Mogul chairman and chief executive, had proposed an offer of 28p a share for LucasVarity, but half of this was in the form of shares, which were unattractive to UK shareholders. It is thought that Federal-Mogul was unwilling to pay more than 30p a share for LucasVarity.

TRW's offer proposes that Victor Rice, LucasVarity's controversial chief executive, will take over as head of the group's combined automotive operations. It is also expected to make him about £17 million, the bulk of this in shares and options acquired since he took control of Victor's predecessor in 1980.

Mr Snell believed LucasVarity would have made "a very nice strategic fit" with Federal-Mogul's businesses making connecting rods, engine bearings, seals and camshafts. However, Federal-Mogul decided it could not make an offer that would meet its hurdles for economic value-added, cash flow, short-term earnings and debt/equity ratios.

LucasVarity was formed from a 1996 merger between Varity and Lucas Industries, one of the best-known names in British engineering. LucasVarity suffered a troubled time on the London stock market. Last November, Mr Rice attempted unsuccessfully to move LucasVarity's domicile and main market listing to the US.

United Utilities pulls plug on £10.7bn Nat Power deal

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

A £10.7 BILLION merger of National Power and United Utilities has collapsed, it emerged yesterday.

United Utilities, the electricity and water company based in the North West of England, is said to have quit the deal that

would have created a giant power company capable of rivalling Scottish Power's customer base and beating those of Eastern Group and PowerGen.

United is thought to have feared that the deal would not have boosted its value. The merger, which was aborted late on Monday, was intended to be a genuine, no-premium tie-up. It would have given National

Power a greater inroad into the domestic market and United an important partner as the power industry consolidates. However, it may have run into regulatory obstacles as the combined group would have had generation capacity and two of the biggest electricity supply businesses. National Power already owns the Midlands supply operation.

Both sides were forced to announce the failed merger yesterday because, ironically, the market began to trade on rumours that a merger was imminent on Tuesday afternoon. Both issued short statements to the Stock Exchange confirming the talks and their demise. National Power shares rose 11½p to 511½p and United Utilities rose 9p to 812p.

The planned merger surprised the City because National Power had signalled that it was keen to buy electricity supply businesses and had not been thought likely to go for a multi-utility. If the generator had been successful with United, it would have taken on electricity distribution, and also water, in which it has no expertise.

Nigel Hawkins, analyst at

Williams de Broe, said: "It is a curious situation. It would have been a leap forward for National Power to take on United's distribution arm and a bigger leap to go into water."

When National Power bought the Midlands supply business last November in a £180 million deal, it said it wanted to buy other supply businesses. The Government is working on plans to force separation of the two functions and the market is expecting a fresh round of consolidation in the power industry.

National Power, which has been spending prolifically overseas, will soon have a cash boost from the enforced sale of power stations demanded by the Government. A sale of Drax in North Yorkshire would raise more than £2 billion.

The failure of the merger will raise the prospects of United finding a fresh partner or predator. As a purely local company, it is poorly placed to play the increasingly national power supply game. As a multi-utility it also has double exposure to regulatory crackdowns.

National Power may target Scottish and Southern Energy, formed via the merger of Scottish Hydro-Electric and Southern Electricity, or Hyder, the Welsh multi-utility. However, these two are likely to face regulatory concerns. Although some would hold up Scottish Power as a precedent for large expansion in utilities, the Scottish company has a smaller share of power generation.

Commentary, page 27



BP Amoco has confirmed that 400 jobs — nearly a fifth of the workforce — are to go at its petro-chemical plant at Grangemouth, Stirlingshire. Story, page 26

RIM poised to bid for Mirror

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

REGIONAL Independent Media, publisher of the *Yorkshire Post*, is poised to make a formal offer for Mirror Group before the end of this month.

The offer, however, is thought unlikely to be much higher than the 200p a share cash offer already suggested.

RIM completes its due diligence investigation of Mirror's accounts. Some RIM advisers are even suggesting that, on the information available so far, it may be difficult to sustain a 200p offer.

RIM, which is backed by venture capital from Can-do

ver, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and the Soros Group and headed by Chris Oakley, a former board member of Mirror, is the only company involved in a process of going through confidential Mirror information at the moment.

RIM's main rival, Trinity, UK's largest regional newspaper group, is not currently carrying out due diligence at the Mirror. It withdrew from talks last month after suggesting a full-share offer worth about 160p at the time.

Trinity is, however, understood to be still interested in

the Mirror and could make an improved offer before the end of the month. A bid from either party is certain to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

If RIM wins Mirror Group the strategy will be to concentrate entirely on the newspaper businesses. The Mirror's 20 per cent stake in Scottish Media would be sold and Live TV either closed or sold if a buyer could be found.

A RIM-owned Mirror would also not go ahead with the relaunch of *The Sporting Life* and instead concentrate on trying to

revive the *Sunday Mirror* and *The People* which have both been losing circulation. The Mirror itself has managed modest circulation gains in recent months against a declining market. The aim would be to differentiate the two Sunday papers more with the Sunday Mirror moving up-market and *The People* concentrating more on competing as a second title in the *News of the World* market.

The market does not seem to be expecting any large additional premium — the Mirror share price yesterday was unchanged at 201½p.

James Capel welcomes Private Clients

We are one of the leading investment managers for private clients.

Our investment strategy is formulated at the highest level but your portfolio is personalised to your own unique needs, not pooled with others.

We care about our clients. As well as tailor-made portfolios we offer something more — access to your own portfolio manager.

You also have the assurance of the professionalism you would expect from a member of the HSBC Group, one of the leading banking and financial services organisations in the world.

The Private Client Specialist.

HSBC

James Capel Investment Management

For more information on how we manage portfolios of £200,000 or more, please call Simon Corbett or Nandita Khanna on 0171 336 9195, fax them on 0171 283 3187 or write to them at the address below.

6 Bevis Marks, London EC3A 7JQ
email: nandita.khanna@jamescapelhsbc.com

James Capel Investment Management is a trading name of HSBC Investment Bank plc
Registered office: 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1BL
Regulated by SFA and a member of the London Stock Exchange

Speed-up plan over pensions

By RICHARD MILES

FINANCIAL regulators yesterday unveiled plans to speed up the payment of redress to an estimated 1.8 million younger victims of the personal pensions mis-selling scandal.

The victims — people who took out a personal pension between April 1988 and June 1994, even though they were entitled to join an occupational scheme — are in line for compensation averaging £4,000.

Life insurance companies, however, can offer redress to personal pension policyholders only if it can be proven that the individuals suffered a financial loss by failing to join the employers' scheme.

Faced with the prospect of long delays while life insurers unravel policyholders' records, the Financial Services Authority and the Personal Investment Authority have given their support to the industry's proposals to simplify the calcu-

lation for financial loss by introducing a "multiplier test".

The FSA has already sought to improve awareness of mis-selling by spending £10 million on a direct mail and advertising campaign, funded by a levy on the industry. The campaign includes the dispatch of some three million letters to possible victims under the heading: "U Owed?"

Regulators have already investigated the cases of policyholders who were aged 35 or over when they were lured into personal pensions, with 388,000 people being offered compensation of £2 billion.

As the scandal has grown to cover more than two million people, industry analysts have upgraded their estimates of the costs to life insurance companies. Current figures put the total bill between £1 billion and £2 billion.

Tempus, page 28

'Changing market' hits Psion

By CHRIS AYRES

SHARES in Psion took a further battering yesterday when the palm-top computer manufacturer said that profits in 1999 would be severely hit by "changing market conditions". The shares fell 11½p to

832½p. The shares were hit earlier this week by an alliance between British Telecom and Microsoft, which threatened Psion's Symbian joint venture with Ericsson, Nokia and Motorola, the mobile phone handset manufacturers.

Psion's latest problems are at its Dacom subsidiary, which produces PC cards for laptop computers. The company has seen a massive fall in demand for PC cards that allow laptops to access the Internet, because laptop manufacturers have been building the cards into their products.

Tempus, page 28

Research chief replaced at SB

By PAUL DURMAN

SMITHKLINE BEECHAM yesterday replaced its head of research and development after only 18 months in the job.

David U Pritchard is succeeded by Tadatomo Yamada — head of the American health-care services business whose sales for \$2 billion (£1.2 billion) was announced on Tuesday.

It was suggested that Dr U Pritchard, who joined from Zeneca, was a "loner" who was out of place amid the openness shared by SB's senior team. Although he had a decent record of bringing new products through the development pipeline, there were doubts about his leadership abilities.

Unlike Dr U Pritchard, Dr Yamada is already a member of the SB board and in 1997 was paid £414,000, including a £131,000 bonus. Dr Yamada, 53, was born in Tokyo, but has spent much of his career in the US, where he attended Stanford and the New York University.

He had responsibility for Diversified Pharmaceutical Services, the US drug purchasing manager, which SB is selling for \$700 million, a deal that will incur a £446 million post-tax loss. He also oversaw Clinical Laboratories, the blood and urine-testing business where the group is selling a 70 per cent stake for \$1.025 billion.

Insurance firm sees less risk in property

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LIBERTY International, the life insurance company chaired by Donald Gordon, the South African insurance businessman, said yesterday that the prospects looked brighter for property than for financial services in Britain.

Unveiling results for the year ended December 1998, Mr Gordon said profits before tax and exceptional items had increased by 14 per cent from £11.2 million to £12.5 million.

Liberty International is part of Mr Gordon's Liberty Life group and has a financial services division and the 72 per cent owned subsidiary, Capital Shopping Centres. Liberty Life is expected to merge with Standard Bank Investment Corp of South Africa.

David Fischel, managing director of Liberty International, said he was still keen to expand the group's financial services operations in the UK, but was wary of the damage that fluctuating economic conditions could inflict on banking stocks.

He said: "We looked at National Provident Institution (NPI) when it announced its intention to demutualise and placed an indicative bid, but we did not get past the first stage."

"In current market conditions a big deal is unlikely."

he said. "The yields on property are currently 6 per cent while those on bonds are 4.3 per cent. At the moment we think we can do better in the property market where there is less risk."

In his statement to shareholders Mr Gordon said 1999 "seems to be shaping up for problems arising from Latin America, China and particularly Hong Kong which is holding on relentlessly to its dollar peg. Europe appears perilously close to deflation."

"Only the United States economy seems to be immune, and subject to ongoing prosperity, with Wall Street flirting with dangerously high levels supported by bounded optimism".

He said that while a degree of caution was understandable in the light of the property crash of the late 1990s, "the prospects for UK property outperforming other UK asset classes over the forthcoming period seem strong".

A final ordinary dividend of 10.3p (1997: 9.6p) lifted the total to 19p from 17.6p. The shares fell 12.5p to 450.5p yesterday.

Last week Mr Gordon announced that he was retiring from Liberty Life but would continue as chairman of Liberty International and CSC.

"In current market conditions a big deal is unlikely."



Kings of the Castle: SAB's Graham Mackay flanked by Nigel Cox, left, and Malcolm Wyman

PETER TREVOR

SAB eyes £4bn London listing

By DOMINIC WALSH

SOUTH African Breweries, which yesterday unveiled plans for a £4 billion London listing, is expected to spin off its hotel and casino interests to focus on its core beer business.

SAB, which will enter the FTSE 100 index, owns Southern Sun, one of Africa's biggest hoteliers. It operates 75 hotels, owning the South African rights to the Holiday Inn and Inter-Continental brands under an agreement with Bass.

Graham Mackay, SAB's chief executive, admitted that floating off some or all of Southern Sun was a possibility. However, no decision would be taken until the five casino licences for which it has applied — it has already won three — have been awarded by the South African gaming authorities.

An exit from hotels and casinos would be a natural progression for a company that over the past two years has divested eight business worth R1.4 billion (£140 million). SAB, whose group finance director is Nigel Cox, with Malcolm Wyman the corporate finance director, is the world's fourth-largest brewer. It has 37 breweries in 18 countries and 98 per cent of the South African market. Its lagers, including Lion and Castle, sell for about 20p a pint in its home market.

Up to £200 million will be raised in the placing, organised by Robert Fleming, Cazenove and Goldman Sachs, to boost its central and eastern European brewing operations, notably in Poland. It is also building a brewery in Russia.

City diary, page 29

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Alcatel hopes to agree stock swap

ALCATEL the French electricals company, has held talks with the Government in Paris over the possibility of a swap of its 44 per cent stake in Framatome, the state-controlled nuclear power plant construction company, for a 20 per cent interest in Thomson-CSF, the defence contractor. Alcatel is believed to want to convert its share of Framatome into a more liquid investment which can be sold. Alcatel already owns 16 per cent of Thomson-CSF and a swap of its Framatome shares for Thomson-CSF stock would potentially put up for grabs a 36 per cent stake in a key French defence company.

Such a move could create an opening for the French Government to revive moves to consolidate the European defence sector. An enlarged Alcatel stake looking for a home would be a useful bargaining chip for Thomson-CSF when negotiating with prospective partners. The French Government retains 42 per cent of Thomson-CSF and has already conceded that it will reduce its interest in the defence contractor if necessary. Alcatel is also thought to have pursued another option of swapping its Framatome shares for assets, in particular the electronic connectors business of Framatome.

Eclipse Blinds in talks

ECLIPSE BLINDS, a maker of components for household blinds, responded to a 52 per cent leap in its share price by admitting that it was in talks that may lead to an offer for the company. The shares rose 30p to 87.5p. Ted Black, chairman, said the discussions were at a "very early stage" and that because the company is highly geared and it had expanded by acquisitions, a parent with "deep pockets" would be "useful". The company issued a profit warning in November, which was followed by cost-cutting measures, including redundancies.

Decline at Viglen

VIGLEN TECHNOLOGY, the computer company chaired by Alan Sugar, said that a "competitive" PC market was to blame for a decline in sales and average selling prices. Pre-tax profit for the six months to December 31 was £2.5 million, against £1.8 million for the comparable five-month period last year, on a turnover of £47 million (£40.2 million). Earnings per share were 1.25p (1.02p). The interim dividend of 0.4p is maintained. Mr Sugar said: "With our focus now firmly aimed on education, the Government's initiatives in schools should create substantial opportunities."

Select acquisitions

SLECT APPOINTMENTS, the recruitment group, yesterday announced two overseas acquisitions in the accounting and finance sectors, sending its shares 5 per cent higher to 616.5p. The company has bought a 75 per cent interest in Link Recruitment Group which has five offices in Australia for A\$11.6 million (£4.5 million) while in The Netherlands, Select has acquired a 60 per cent interest in Canock Chase Capital, a provider of professional credit control managers, for 4.2 million guilders (£1.3 million).

Newscom in for P&S

THE QUEUE forming to buy Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers lengthened yesterday when News Communication & Media, the group formerly known as Southern Newspapers, said it was in talks to buy the group. Newscom, based in Southampton and with papers throughout the South of England, said that it had applied to the Department of Trade and Industry to have its interest in P&S referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission alongside Johnston Press and Newsquest, who are also stalking the group.

Doyle approached

DOYLE HOTEL GROUP, the privately owned Irish hotel operator that is in takeover talks with its quoted rival, Jurys Hotel Group, is understood to have received a number of approaches from other parties. The approaches, believed to include one from Starwood Hotels & Resorts, the US group, are said to have been prompted by delays to the signing of a deal with Jurys, which is understood to have offered about £160 million. However, Doyle claimed last night that "discussions with Jurys are ongoing" and it hoped to unveil a deal by the end of the month.

JSB ahead of budget

JSB SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGIES, which produces software to stop employees looking at Internet sites not related to their work, yesterday said that its first interim results, since its flotation on AIM last June, were ahead of budget. The company recorded a pre-tax loss of £373,000 for the six months to November 30, compared with a profit of £6,000 for the year ended May 31, 1998. JSB said that since flotation it had invested heavily in marketing its SURCONTROL product in the US. JSB forecasts a full-year loss of £1.1 million. The shares fell 12.5p to 230p.

US sales boost P&S

PHARMACIA & UPJOHN, the Swedish-American drugs company, lifted fourth-quarter profits 29 per cent to \$235 million (£145 million), helped by strong US sales and reaffirmed that it expected double-digit earnings growth in 1999 and beyond. Global sales rose 9 per cent to \$1.85 billion. The company took \$144 million in pre-tax charges, of which \$92 million came from a previously announced restructuring and \$32 million from the sale of most of its nutrition business to Fresenius. The charges were the final portion of a \$450 million restructuring programme initiated in 1997.

Citigroup drops Visa

CITIGROUP, the world's biggest financial institution, yesterday resigned from Visa International's board and will move most of its credit cards to Mastercard Citibank, a subsidiary, one of the largest credit card issuers with just under \$70 billion (£43.2 billion) in credit card receivables. John Reed, co-chairman of Citigroup, previously said he would try to remove brand names from cards issued by his bank. Visa is the world's biggest credit card brand. Mastercard will let Citibank put its name as the main logo on the front of its cards. (Bloomberg)

BP Amoco to shed 400 in Scotland

By CARL MORTISHED

BP AMOCO is laying off 400 staff at its Grangemouth petrochemical plant only three months after the oil company revealed plans for a £500 million expansion of the facility with the creation of 2,500 jobs.

The Scottish job cuts are likely to be a prelude to a shakeout at BP Amoco worldwide as the company attempts to protect its margins from the effect of a price collapse in both oil and petrochemicals.

The job cuts of mostly administrative posts, form part of a review of BP Amoco's staffing levels, which the company blamed on the "most dif-

ficult operating environment in recent times". Low oil and chemical prices have forced the company to go far beyond the 6,000 job cuts indicated when BP launched its take-over of Amoco.

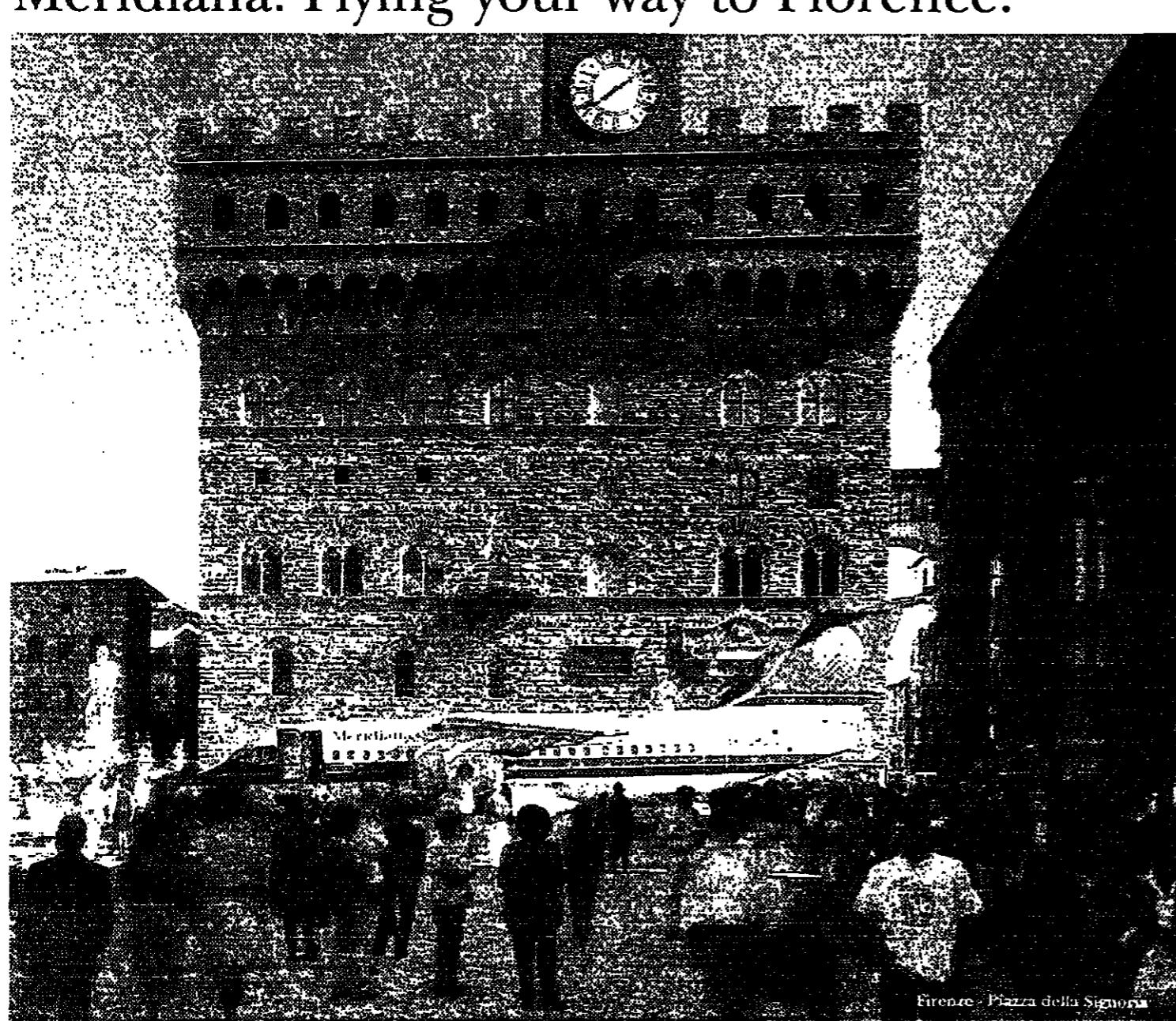
BP Amoco said yesterday that it hoped to achieve most of the job reductions by voluntary severance or early retirement but admitted it could not rule out compulsory redundancies. In November the company announced the construction of a pipeline to link the facilities at Grangemouth and Hull that would create 2,500 jobs over three years.

EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$	2.01	2.04
Austria Sch.	20.80	19.14
Belgium Fr.	61.24	56.28
Canada \$	1.552	1.536
Denmark Kr.	0.6274	0.6274
Denmark Kr.	11.30	10.61
Egypt	5.75	5.14
Finland Mkr.	9.11	8.36
France Fr.	9.34	8.53
Germany Dmk.	1.978	2.136
Greece Dr.	4.90	4.51
Hong Kong \$	13.45	12.29
Iceland Kr.	1.10	1.07
Indonesia Rp.	17.629	17.595
Israel She.	6.69	6.33
Italy Lira	25.25	24.74
Japan Yen	201.82	184.29
Malta	0.863	0.804
Netherlands Gld.	3.982	3.067
New Zealand \$	1.20	1.15
Norway Kr.	13.04	12.10
Portugal Esc.	10.729	10.605
Spain Pta.	239.94	237.94
Sweden Kr.	13.64	12.54
Switzerland Fr.	2.482	2.234
United Kingdom £	51.72	53.00
USA \$	1.736	1.693

Rates for small denominations. Rates only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at time of writing yesterday.

Meridiana. Flying your way to Florence.



London - Florence 1G3536 h. 09.55; 1G3538 h. 14.20; 1G3534 h. 19.25 • London - Palermo (via Florence) 1G3538 h. 14.20. For information and booking see your travel agent or phone Meridiana on 0171.8392222.

Your Private Airline.  Meridiana

www.meridiana.it

For a man whose career is about to come to an abrupt end, John O'Brien was in amazingly good spirits yesterday.

Under his tenure as rail franchising director, Britain's railways have slid into such sharp decline that half the services are now less punctual than under British Rail and at twice the cost to the country: the bill, this year, is £1.98 billion.

So why is Mr O'Brien so sanguine after handing out such huge subsidies for such abysmal performance? His answer is that he has been powerless to do anything about it.

Sadly, he's right. Since the railways began their punctuality decline, John Prescott has uttered terrifying public threats about how he will stand for none of their nonsense. But not even the pugilistic Prescott has been able to swipe the grin from the rail companies' faces. As yesterday's bizarre array of penalties and prizes shows, the rail companies are financially untouchable.

Mr Prescott only has himself to blame. In Opposition, he was threatening repatriation with such intent that the likes of Stagecoach and National Express would not go near British Rail unless their money were guaranteed immune from political interference. The result is 25 contracts, guaranteed under European law, which promise that Mr Prescott must keep his paws off their bonuses — no matter how much he objects to them. Neither can he do anything about the mini-

Train companies railroad Prescott

small penalties that can be inflicted if they make a complete botch of running the trains.

Take FirstGroup, the first UK rail company to be threatened with legal action by a city council because its service was so abysmal. It collected an £8,000 punctuality bonus yesterday. But what about Mr Prescott's promise that he will not tolerate poor punctuality, and his threat to claim back the "keys" to franchises?

This is as the train companies know very well when they hear it, is all nonsense. When they gather at his summit on March 25, they will dutifully take some earache, sail in the knowledge that he can do as little as Mr O'Brien. Their money is safe.

For public relations reasons than any real need to pass the buck, the rail operators like to blame Railtrack for their poor performance. Railtrack is far from blameless; it now takes pride in being responsible only for 50 per cent of delays. That, admittedly, is an improvement.

But the real problem with the railways is the financial framework which eschews commercial common sense. The operators are not given incentives to make major improvements in their performance and so they do not. This is the key and it will prove

as much of an obstacle to the forthcoming Strategic Rail Authority as it has to Mr O'Brien.

If Mr Prescott wants the Government to have any real power over the railways, he has no option but to rewrite the contracts with the operators, giving them the longer franchises they want in return for much harsher performance targets. Otherwise, his weapons are restricted to surveys, summits and hot air.

Jilted Nat Power needs right partner

It is cruel indeed that, so close to Valentine's Day, National Power should be jilted by United Utilities.

But perhaps the early break-up is just as well, for United was an odd choice of partner for the generator. National Power is keen on expanding its customer base as it generates capacity has contracted. The former mighty electricity producer will soon be a shadow of its former

COMMENTARY by our City Editor

self after the Government ordered a second round of power station sales.

Last November it advanced its ambitions by buying the supply division of Midlands Electricity. Then it said it was looking at other supply businesses but did not want to get saddled with distribution, an understandable point of view. The growth potential in sending electricity buzzing around the wires is severely limited or non-existent, depending on whether you are an optimist, and the prospect of a new regulatory price review hardly adds to its attractions.

But here we are only months later and National Power was on the verge of taking on not only a distribution division but also a water business, something in which it has not a trick of expertise. It could be that the generator was planning to sell on the bits it did not need, but that may have been a lengthy procedure and good prices would have been far from certain.

It is not the first time that National Power's actions seem at odds with its intentions. Four years ago the generator had shown little interest in buying a regional electricity company until its rival PowerGen went for Midlands Electricity. It then put in a bid for Southern. Both bids were blocked by the DTI's vaguely defined fears over competition in the power industry.

PowerGen fumed but National Power bounced back, deciding it was now no longer interested in a regional business after all.

Then, a couple of years ago, it changed its mind again, focusing on trying to strike alliances with power suppliers.

When PowerGen bought East Midlands Electricity last year, National Power made its move on the supply half of Midlands.

Last year came reports of a failed merger with another large energy company.

National Power's overseas expansion is yielding slow-growing fruit. But its action at home is causing bemusement. Next time it gets close to the merger altar, it

must have the ring ready. It must find a more suitable partner and ensure that it is not jilted. Stomping off, intimating that it was never really that keen on the wedding, is no longer an option if the company intends to convince investors that it has a credible strategy.

FSA gets first past the post

The odds were probably against it, but the actuaries of the pensions industry have come up with a proposal that should hasten the end of the pensions mis-selling debacle.

Without some such sensible idea, this scary drama would threaten to rival *The Mousetrap* with its longevity. No wonder that the regulators have leapt at the idea.

The FSA will have enough to keep it busy without the pensions problem being a permanent fixture in the pending tray.

Spousing a "ready reckoner" approach to determining who deserves redress and how much they should get will undoubtedly result in the pensions firms paying out to some undeserving cases. But the firms have already accepted that the whole process is biased in favour of the custom-

ers rather than the pension providers. The industry now seems to have acknowledged that there is no point in fighting against the presupposition of guilt. Now it would like to bring the sorry episode to a close and get on with selling all the new products that the Government is kindly encouraging on to the market.

That the previous Government was the greatest mis-seller of personal pensions is an argument that the industry has deemed unhelpful to its cause.

Yet, despite the patronising advertising campaign with the ice-cream man, the public is proving remarkably reticent in demanding redress. A simpler set of calculations may offend actuarial sensitivities but should encourage people to fill in the forms and claim their rewards.

Out of a trough

THE misfortunes of PIC International, the pig breeding rump of Dalgety, inspire many a farmyard metaphor: eggs and baskets come to mind. Investments that are at the mercy of the hog cycle are not for those of a chicken disposition. But the directors of PIC are a brave bunch. Pig prices may be dismal now — in the US the slaughter price is less than a third of the cost of getting a piglet to that stage — but PIC is looking to the future. There may be some who worry about its implications but PIC thinks genetic agriculture abounds with exciting prospects for pigs.

BSkyB to offer free Net access

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

BRITISH Sky Broadcasting, the satellite television venture, is to offer free Internet access to all its digital subscribers. BSkyB wants to use the Internet to drive both digital television and interactive services as a way of reaching its target of six million subscribers by 2003.

Yesterday BSkyB announced a marketing alliance with AOL, the Internet access company. Initially, BSkyB will provide content such as the Sky Sports website to AOL. In return, AOL will market Sky Digital to its subscribers.

Mark Booth, BSkyB chief executive, yesterday set a new ambitious target for Sky Digital — one million digital subscribers by October.

BSkyB, in which News International, owner of *The Times*, has a 40 per cent stake, said it had signed more than \$50,000 digital subscribers by the end of January — a better performance than expected. Of these, 34 per cent were new Sky subscribers.

Carlton to build up ONdigital

BY RAYMOND SNODDY

MICHAEL GREEN, chairman of Carlton Communications, yesterday told shareholders the company planned this year to build on the "promising" start made by ONdigital, the commercial digital terrestrial television service launched in November.

Carlton and Granada each own 50 per cent of the digital terrestrial venture.

Mr Green told the annual meeting that Carlton had "made a good start to the year". Television was performing well, with successful formats such as *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* and dramas such as *Peak Practice* helping ITV to a 41 per cent peak-time audience share in January.

Carlton also announced it is launching an Internet service for retailers and publishers of home entertainment. Retailers will be able to link their websites to a dedicated Carlton site that will handle orders, credit card payments, stock sourcing and delivery.

Medeva profits decline

BY PAUL DURMAN

MEDEVA, the pharmaceuticals group, yesterday declared it had a "robust" view of its future despite the continuing decline in profits from its best-selling product Bill Boagie, chief executive, said: "I don't feel vulnerable. The share price has been low for six months, but no one's come for us."

Although Medeva makes substantial profits, its shares, at 100p, trade at only 6½ times last year's earnings — a fraction of its rivals.

The reason is the fall in profits from methylphenidate, the treatment for hyperactive children. Sales fell 39 per cent to £68 million last year, causing Medeva's profits from its central nervous system drugs to fall by 54 million to £52 million.

Pre-tax profits fell by £1.6 million to £9.3 million. Total sales declined to £32.4 million (£35.4 million). A final dividend of 3.75p a share will lift the total by 5 per cent to 5.75p.

Tempus, page 28

Vaux acts swiftly to find new director

VAUX GROUP, the North East brewer and hotel operator, has moved quickly to fill the post of finance director left vacant by this week's shock dismissal of Neal Gossage along with the chief executive, Martin Grant (Dominic Walsh writes).

Neil Chisman, the respected Stakis finance director, and Mike Thompson of Marston Thompson & Evershed have already been approached to sound out their interest in the post. Both men are looking for new jobs after takeover bids

Save on business calls to all places all of the time.

No wonder thousands of businesses are coming back every month.

Whether you're doing business locally, nationally or on the other side of the world, BT's business discounts can help you save money.

BT



STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Investors hold nerve despite growing gloom

SHARE prices closed modestly lower in London yesterday, although the outcome could have been a lot worse following the 150-point fall overnight in New York.

In the event, London put together a resilient performance shrugging off the gloomy quarterly *Inflation Report* from the Bank of England. At one stage, the FTSE 100 index was nursing a fall of more than 80 points, but rallied during the final hours with the help of an opening rise on Wall Street to reduce the fall to 9.7 at 5,770.2.

It was the sixth consecutive day of losses for the market. The FTSE 250 index was also 19.9 down at 5,157.6 as the total number of shares traded reached 958 million.

Part of the resilience could be traced back to a strong performance by the Anglo-Dutch food group Unilever, up 36.5p to 522.5p. The price touched a low of 460p in October, and has been looking oversold ever since. Dealers say the differential between the ordinary shares and the NV is now 16 per cent and they have been urging clients to switch into the cheaper stock.

A strong performance from BSkyB, up 60p to 474.4p, also kept the market on an even keel. The satellite broadcaster, 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, was helped by the high level of subscribers for its digital satellite service. This left rival Carlton Communications looking disgruntled with its shares losing 38p to 59p.

British Telecom wobbled ahead of results later today that are expected to show a downturn in profitability. The price touched 882p before ending all square at 908p.

News of the breakdown in merger talks between National Power, up 11p to 511.5p, and United Utilities, 9p better at 812p, succeeded in focusing attention back on the utilities sector. National Power may not want to revive talks with United, but it has confirmed it is still on the lookout for other suitable candidates. Hyder, up 10p to 818.5p, and Scottish and Southern Energy, 3p firmer at 618p, are both seen as targets because of their regional electricity interests.

National Power already owns Midland Electricity, while United was formed by the merger of Norweb and North West Water. Dresdener



Mark Booth, chief executive of BSkyB, who saw shares of the satellite broadcaster rise 60p to 474.4p on digital sales news

Kleinwort Benson, the broker, remains a big bull of NP.

Revived takeover talk hoisted Safeway 85p to 298.4p in heavy turnover that saw almost 13 million shares traded. Once again, the food retailer, which earlier this week came out with some impressive like-for-like sales growth, is being linked with the stores group K-Mart.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

First Leisure continued to

make headway with a rise of 64p to 226.4p on turnover of 1.73 million shares. There is still talk of a bid from Bass, down 11p at 307p, after a downgrading from BT Alex Brown, the broker. It has lowered its earnings forecasts for the next three years by between 1 per cent and 3 per cent after the annual meeting.

Big volume was recorded in

the stock of Internet-related stocks overnight in the US also took its toll of Divons, 44p lower at 982.4p. Reuters, which unveiled lower profits on Tuesday, also finished 40p down at 793.5p.

Reunion Mining continued to make headway adding 12.4p to 88p. Gossips say the bidder is Anglo American, which is anxious to get its hands on the group's Skorpion zinc mine.

Speculative buying hoisted Monument Oil & Gas 44p to 414p. Dealers say Monument might become target for Enterprise Oil 114p better at 249.4p, if its proposed merger with Lasmo, down 6p at 110p, falls through.

Old English Pub Co retreated another 24p to 137.4p. It has now fallen from the 261p level at which it issued a profit warning at the start of this month. The company looks vulnerable to a bid.

□ GLHT-EDGED: Longer-dated issues buckled after a positive start, weighed down by the heavy load of new issues the market was forced to absorb. This included £1.65 billion of London & Continental Railways and the reissue of two euro/sterling bond issues totalling 650 million.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 17p to 101.53 as 35,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 fell 17p to 150.48, while, at the shorter end, Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 7p better at 101.07.

□ NEW YORK: US shares saw-saw in early trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was 5.15 points lower at 9,127.88.

□ Because of problems at our supplier, issues prices quoted are Tuesday's.

One of the last bastions of resale price maintenance is under fire. After long agitation, the Director-General of Fair Trading has asked the Restrictive Practices Court to stop manufacturers fixing minimum prices at which retailers may sell all their non-prescription medicines most of us reach for when we suffer from headaches, colds or things too embarrassing to mention.

From the late 1950s onward, the Institute of Economic Affairs and others campaigned for free price competition in retailing to bring prices of branded goods down, boost sales and raise living standards. This classic campaign for free market forces brought together aggressive entrepreneurs and traditional economists. They fought a long battle against entrenched forces big and small who wanted a quiet, stable life.

The forces of order had a genuine if emotional case based on keeping local shops, ensuring responsible trading and good service. But fixing retail prices was mainly an instrument of manufacturers' pow-

Our champions become Big Brother

er. The lure of price cuts won and resale price maintenance was outlawed 35 years ago. Only a shrinking group of exceptions was permitted by the Court.

The latest to go was books. In the end, publishers gave up without a struggle. Books were exempted to help literary small bookshops to survive but mainly to use high-priced best sellers to subsidise others that had little hope of selling well, let alone making a profit. That gradually changed, as books fought back against television, reading became a growth sector of the leisure industry and made literary novels more viable.

Most of all, Waterstones and other specialist chains prospered by stocking lots of titles, to serve this new market. The old trade restrictions were not needed.

Over-the-counter medicines raise like issues. Consumers need, refa-

ble, skilled local prescription pharmacists, who need decent profits on other lines to survive. But Boots the Chemist is nearly everywhere these days and local chemists are doing better by serving the expanding markets for all sorts of health goods.

Defenders still claim that a quarter of chemists shops will close if prices were freed. Aggressors such as Asda claim that consumers are paying £300 million a year more than they need, much of it on items such as vitamins.

In those terms, it is virtually an open-and-shut case. But that is not the whole story. The balance of power has been transformed. Even the most powerful manufacturers of branded groceries are now on the back foot in Britain. But their power to manipulate prices and boost margins has not been dissipated. It has been seized by im-



GRAHAM SEAR-JEAN

mensely powerful retailers, especially the big four grocers: Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway and Asda.

Generations of consumers who grew up after the Resale Prices Act have much to thank the supermarkets for. First came lower prices, then greater choice. So we do now. Own-label goods, pioneered by Sainsbury and others from Marks

& Spencer's example in clothing, allowed people to buy goods of comparable quality to leading brands at much lower prices. They introduced novelties such as muesli and wines from new provinces to ordinary families.

Success has, however, built the combined market share of the big four to what competition authorities call a "complex monopoly" and economists call oligopoly. They share at least two thirds of the grocery market, depending on how you define it. And as markets have neared saturation, competitive instincts have turned to abuse of monopoly power.

Once they captured the "excess" profits of manufacturers, or farmers, some supermarkets began to be in the textbook fashion of oligopolists. Most have gradually learnt not to compete seriously with each other on price, in spite of their constant claims to the contrary. The last "price war" was aimed

at keeping out new entrants. Occasionally, however, little skirmishes that amount to little more than game-playing play havoc with small shops. Not long ago, baked beans were priced down to 5p a tin, below cost, as each tried to be most consumer friendly. Lately, some have sold bread at 7p or 9p a loaf, less than half normal price.

Such loss leaders may be within the honoured traditional practices of supermarkets, which still like to think of themselves as the cheeky chappie on the market stall. The effect, however, is that of predatory pricing: to drive out competition in order to jack up prices later on. If there are victims, they will be Britain's remaining small shops, which cannot afford a monopolist's cross subsidies.

The Director-General of Fair Trading should look at these practices before he focuses on medicine prices. Otherwise he can guarantee that his victory in the court will lead to exactly the sort of irresponsible trading the die-hards predict. Selling panaceas as 5p loss leaders is not healthy competition.

Investors count the cost of lasting lure of the Orient

Risks mount for foreign banks as casualties continue in China, writes Alasdair Murray

For investors gathered in London last week to China's answer to Howard Davies the message was simple: despite all the turmoil in Asia and the collapse of one of the country's most prominent investment companies, it is business as usual.

Zhou Zhengqing, chairman of the Securities Regulatory Commission, reassured his audience of City financiers and businessmen that China remains committed to stable exchange rates and will continue to use expansionary policies to maintain a healthy economic growth rate. Foreign investors should also be tempted back into the Chinese equity markets by the country's promised radical overhaul of its securities laws which will clarify ownership structures and improve financial reporting laws.

Although no one would expect a senior Chinese official to say otherwise, Mr Zhengqing's morale-boosting comments, superficially at least, contain more than a element of truth. China managed to trot out respectable growth figures last year, with GDP rising at 7.8 per cent compared with a Government target of 8 per cent. The Chinese Government has promised to raise fixed investment by 12 per cent this year to keep GDP growth bubbling along at around 7 per cent. China's Central Bank is sitting on massive currency reserves of \$145 billion (£88 billion) with which to fight a financial crisis. Despite the well-documented problems across Asia, the country recorded a hefty current account surplus of \$30 billion last year, with foreign direct investment modestly increasing to \$45 billion.

Leading American companies are still sufficiently lured by the Orient to vote China joint second in a list of favoured investment sites in a recent survey.



Devaluation of the yuan coupled with a fundamental overhaul of the economy may be the only solution to China's problems

It is hard, however, to reconcile this bullish picture with the market pandemonium prompted by just one passing reference in the Chinese press to devaluation at the end of last month. That the brief allusion to the dreaded D word — in an article scripted by a young journalist and tucked away in China's sole English language newspaper — should so shake the market, speaks volumes for the depth of nervousness over China's economic prospects.

Only an emergency distancing operation conducted by Dai Xianglong, the governor of the Chinese Central Bank, succeeded in — temporarily at least — calming the markets.

Analysts have long been aware that there is a credibility gap between the official data and the reality of an economy suffering massive overcapacity and a government struggling to impose badly needed structural reform without causing social discontent. However, it has taken the very real collapse of the Guangdong International Trust and Investment Company (GITIC) finally to bring this message home to investors.

GITIC was forced into bankruptcy last month with debts conservatively estimated to total \$4.4 billion. At its peak, the company seemed to embody all the potential riches of this booming province of Southern China. Its collapse has highlighted everything currently wrong with Chinese capitalism: uncontrollable over-investment in the property sector; a structure so opaque that the liquidator has not discovered the full extent of its liabilities; a business strategy driven by politics, not economics, and more than just a whiff of corruption.

For the first time in recent years, foreign banks have been burned in China. Government nods and winks that investing in the myriad of International Trusts and Investment companies (ITICS) would prove as secure as sovereign lending have not been honoured. Instead, the Chinese Government has washed its hands of GITIC.

International banks are understandably angered by the Chinese Government's attitude, but they must share some of the blame. Normal risk analysis appears to have been thrown out of the window, with the banks not only seduced by promised profits but desperate to win favour with

the authorities to guarantee future expansion.

Nor is GITIC likely to prove the last casualty. Another Guangdong company, Guangdong Enterprises, is teetering on the brink with debts of nearly \$3 billion. An ITIC in the Manchurian city of Dalian also recently defaulted on a \$20 million certificate of deposit jointly owed to a number of European banks.

Japanese banks have claimed that the company's predicament is effectively in default of loans worth \$2 billion. Chinese authorities reject these claims.

There is no doubt, however, that more of China's 240 ITICS are likely to go under, leaving foreign banks counting the cost. The Chinese Central Bank estimates ITICS are holding foreign debts of \$8.1 billion. Independent observers claim the real figure is twice as much.

The GITIC collapse has finally stung the Chinese Government into action, as much as to reduce its own exposure to the ITICS as to appease private investors. While wholesale overhaul has been promised, to date only five smaller ITICS have been earmarked for clo-

sure and 13 others for restructuring. The action appears to be too little too late to prevent the fallout being felt elsewhere in China's economy. The two main stock markets, in Shanghai and Shenzhen, have fallen to all-time lows while foreign bank lending premiums are beginning to increase.

Equally worrying, for a Government obsessed with preserving social order, there is growing evidence of the human cost of China's economic problems. In Shenzhen, a group of 150 investors have taken the unusual step of asking for a licence to protest against a brokerage firm that they claim has defrauded them of \$56 million.

Elsewhere in the country there has been a spate of bombs that have killed more than 31 people and injured 100 during the last month.

The Chinese Government is faced with an economy in desperate need of a radical restructuring programme that will inevitably lead to even larger social costs. External analysts estimate the real unemployment rate stands at 15 per cent, with some 170 million rural workers "surplus" to requirements. Re-forming the nationalised state

area would get you little more than a lock-up in Bayswater."

I TRUST Allied Domecq, waiting patiently to do a much-needed deal with Seagram, the Canadian drinks group, has seen the latest edition of Fortune.

There is a lengthy interview with Edgar Bronfman Jr, the 43-year-old family scion who took Seagram into Hollywood and music. He doesn't mention dirkies once.

Instead Bronfman explains how entertainment is going to come right. He sold his du Pont shares to pay for his entry into Hollywood, and du Pont shares nearly doubled, says Fortune acutely. He sold out of Time Warner before those shares started to climb. He bought MCA shortly before Steven Spielberg left.

So the joke in Hollywood is that Bronfman is information's answer to "Wrong Way" Corrigan. He was a US flier in the 1930s who left New York for California, and landed in Ireland instead.

Cape of hope

FOR the price of a lock-up in Bayswater, John Aspinall's son is selling a villa in South Africa the haunt of pop stars and super-models and voted one of the world's top 50 houses to rent. Cost, £1 million, according to Christie & Co, the estate agent.

Very little of the above is true, except for the sale by Bassa Aspinall of the Villa Romelia, just outside Cape

Town, but it is all in the estate agent's brochure anyway.

That headline price of £1 million is actually £800,000. The villa was in the top 50 in the Conde Nast Travellers Guide, the estate agent tells me — except that it wasn't.

And as to pop stars and super-models, well, Naomi Campbell dropped in once but never stayed. Ditto Mark Thatcher, the only other celebrity anyone can think of. Celebrity?

Christie's mutters engagingly about "agent's poetic licence". Still, the villa looks nice.

MARTIN WALLER
city.diary@the-times.co.uk

Boards pass over the IT conundrums

Flick through the annual report of any large American high-tech company and you are likely to see a profile of its "chief technology officer" or "chief information officer".

These creatures are usually former senior technicians who have at some point in their career decided to change out of their white coat and into a pinstripe suit. In the US, being chief technology officer (or "cto") is only slightly less impressive than being chief executive or finance director.

In Britain, however, such executives are still a rather rare breed. Only companies that specialise in technology — such as Pison, the palmitoy computer manufacturer, and a clutch of tiny Cambridge-based start-up ventures — are likely to employ technical experts at board level. Even then, it is usually only to please American investors.

But with technology becoming more important — and more complex — by the day, the lack of chief technology officers on the boards of British companies could become a problem. Indeed, it could lead to some of the major strategic advantages of technology being overlooked.

Research by the Gartner Group, published this week, seems to support this theory. The research, based on a survey of European and US businesses with annual sales of more than \$250 million (£150 million), suggests that crucial technology issues are still being handled by a small number of people on the boards of large companies.

These issues could include how best to set up an intranet or which mobile phone



THE HOT NEWS IN INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

company should be used by employees. Companies also face the key question of how to use the Internet to their advantage. According to the Gartner Group, most European companies believe that these issues should be dealt with by their IT departments. After all, many British board members are accountants by training, and find IT issues boring and complicated.

Is this situation likely to change in the near future? Peter Kirwan, editor of Computing magazine, says: "We are seeing a generational shift happening, but there's a lot of older people who need to get out of the way first."

□ THE US may end up with a different technological standard for third-generation mobile phones to Europe and Japan, according to Siemens, the German engineering giant. The situation would be a disaster for the global mobile phone market, which hopes growth will be fuelled by a single worldwide standard. But the US and Europe cannot agree. "There's always room for a compromise," Volkmar Jung, executive director of Siemens, said. "But at the moment, it looks like a battle."

CHRIS AYRES

THE SUNDAY TIMES

FREE MONET PRINT FOR EVERY READER

Claude Monet's Pond with Waterlilies

FREE WITH EVERY PAPER ON SUNDAY

THE SUNDAY TIMES ART COLLECTION

Yves of change

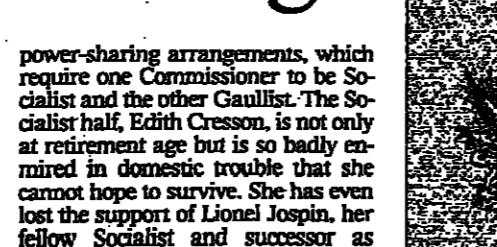
YVES-THIBAULT de Silguy, the all-conquering father of the euro, has been spotted around Paris in an unusual posture. On his knees and with his hands clasped imploringly in front of him.

Let me explain. De Silguy, one of two French Commissioners, sees his five-year term of office expire at the end of the year. He is desperate to stay and see through the rest of the great euro experiment.

His problem is France's peculiar



De Silguy is forced to plead for his job with the powers that be



Just a snifter

BIZARRE scenes at the launch of African Breweries' £4 billion flotation in London, where City journalists are handed a prospectus on arrival and told they will have to hand it back before they leave. It is some American nonsense to do with the SEC, which insists the document can only be given to bona fide investors.

So fleeting was the glimpse afforded that we might have missed news of directors' generous relocation expenses from South Africa. Two get £100,000 a year for three years, a third a total of £150,000. Graham Mackay, chief executive, says: "You have to realise that in South Africa the price of a five-bedroom house with a swimming pool and an acre of land in a good

area would get you little more than a lock-up in Bayswater."



"How do I eradicate my broker's number?"



THEATRE
Ian McKellen
plays Prospero
in Yorkshire

PAGE 36

THE TIMES

ARTS

OPERA

Kim Begley
togs up for
ENO's Parsifal

PAGE 37



At hea
MOVIES



The director Jack Hill: A chance encounter with the adoring Quentin Tarantino rescued him from a 20-year semi-obscure

Don't call Jason Patric an actor any more, not since he produced — as well as starred in — *Your Friends & Neighbors*. Carol Allen reports

Since his 1987 debut in the rather silly vampire movie *The Lost Boys*, 32-year-old Jason Patric has carved out a decent, middle-ranking career for himself as a leading actor in films of variable quality and success.

They include a highly praised performance in *Rush*, in which he played a drug-addicted cop, and his favourite role as a punch drunk boxer in

And now, Jason and the arguments

After Dark My Sweet. On the downside, he was also in Barry Levinson's *Sleepers*, with Brad Pitt, Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman, playing one of a group of friends wreaking revenge on the reform school

warden who had abused them as children, and co-starred with Sandra Bullock in his first and probably last action movie, the dreadful *Speed 2*. "I can't forget it," he says, "because it was such a terrible

experience for me as an actor.

Just miserable. I'd felt I was in a career rut and wanted to try a different genre, but making it just confirmed the instinct I'd always had to resist that type of role. I don't want to be a component in a \$100 million machine."

The experience inspired him

to take a leaf out of Bullock's book and form his own production company. Now the first fruits of that decision can be seen in *Your Friends & Neighbors*, writer/director Neil LaBute's follow-up movie to his acclaimed debut *In The Company of Men* and Patric's first producer credit. The film (see review opposite) is a stylistic ensemble piece which takes a sourly realistic and witty look at sex and the city through the experiences of six thirtysomething urban professionals. Although it shares its distinctly jaundiced view of humanity with LaBute's earlier film, the resemblance, argues Patric, stops there.

"In Neil's first movie the main character's deliberately being malicious. This is about people reacting to their own needs and wants. Nobody's deliberately trying to hurt anyone and frankly they hurt themselves more than anyone else. He's showing us the

subtext of people's lives, which we don't normally see. The handling of relationships in movies is usually pathetic, nothing to do with how real people live."

Despite his protestations to the contrary, Patric plays a character who will make women in particular gasp at his behaviour. If a woman dumps him, he blames her for the failure of the relationship and feels justified in taking cruel revenge. When his friend's wife rejects his advances, he verbally demolishes her behaviour which he sees as the expression of a healthy self image".

But Patric can find some good in him. "He's more complex than just a bastard or a misogynist," he says. "There's a perverse rationale to his logic. He has an inflexible set of rules for what he considers common decency. When someone crosses that line he feels he has a right to take action. It would be a lot easier for people

CINEMA: The director Jack Hill is suddenly in demand again, after a public homage by a very famous disciple. Janie Lawrence met him

Tarantino has put his money where his mouth is. Tomorrow Hill's 1975 film *Switchblade Sisters* is being re-released here by Tarantino's distribution company, Rolling Thunder Pictures (see review opposite). Plainly this turn of events has taken the 60-year-old American by surprise. For

despite the increasing glare of the publicity spotlight, he hasn't yet fallen into the auto-pilot responses of the much interviewed.

Engagingly mild in manner, with the hesitant speech inflections of Superman Clark Kent, the man is not easily reconciled with his past work.

"It was disarmed and delighted, and continues to be. But it transpired that he was unable to return the compliment. "I had heard of Tarantino and knew that he had won the Cannes award for *Pulp Fiction*, but I'd never seen any of his movies," says Hill.

Such have been Tarantino's publicly fulsome compliments that Hill's work is undergoing something of a resurgence.

Tarantino has since declared that his own *Jackie Brown* is a straightforward homage to Hill's *Fox Brown*, with the Jackie of the title being a direct reference to Hill. What's more,

the lead role in *Jackie Brown* was taken by the *Fox Brown* actress Pam Grier. "It's given me a new visibility," Hill says wryly. "Critics wouldn't even look at my films before, let alone review them. Now they

call them Post-Modern."

ton. It's on TV. Nothing's hidden any more."

Certainly the violence of *Switchblade Sisters* is greatly softened by what appears to modern eyes to be its entertainingly high camp content. Such lines as "Everybody's gotta be in a gang — it just ain't healthy to lone it. You dig?" are delivered where the ketchup quota is less than a contemporary episode of *Casualty* and the nastiness of the characters is directly proportionate to the width of their bell bottoms.

"It was supposed to be a teenage *Clockwork Orange*," Hill says. "A fantasy about cute blondes in street gangs. In the 1970s audiences

liked it, but today they love it."

It was never Hill's intention to be a film director. As a musician studying at UCLA his goal was to write film scores.

Then he found himself helping on other student productions, notably alongside his classmate Francis Ford Coppola.

"Francis had not the slightest

question in his mind that he

would be the hottest director

in Hollywood. He directed all his energies towards that. I

never even had an agent."

He looks towards his wife of 25 years who nods in agreement. "When you're young you can abuse your body, and believe me I did. But when you reach a certain point, it's doing damage to your psyche and I just don't want that. Difficult as it is to imagine, Hill's most

public fan may one day come

to share this perspective.

about the dialogue, and for the kind of acting that we needed, an intensive rehearsal period was essential."

Actors taking control of their professional lives by going into production is not a new phenomenon. Major stars, many of them women wanting perhaps to redress the male-biased power and money imbalance, have been doing it for years.

But actors as producers are also making an impact outside the major studio system on the lower-budget and creatively more exciting independent scene. Stanley Tucci has turned producer for *The Imposters*, his second film as writer/director, and ER star Anthony Edwards joined forces with fellow debut film producer Bill Kenwright for *Don't Go Breaking My Heart* (also reviewed opposite).

Patric has his own theory as to why the inmates are taking over the asylum. "Actors and others are finding that creatively Hollywood is now incredibly boring. But there's a lot of money to be made so nobody talks about it."

"Movies are a business and that's fine, but I feel I had a lot more to give than just showing up with my lines. I want to create the kind of movies that I care about and can be proud of."



"I wanted to create a situation for actors that I'd never had," says Jason Patric of his new line of work

to take if I were wearing a swastika, like Ralph Fiennes in *Schindler's List*. When you are wearing Calvin Klein and sitting down in a restaurant, it's more chilling."

Patric did not, however, decide to produce LaBute's film merely in order to give himself a really meaty acting role. "There were lots of projects I could have made as vehicles for me, but I'm off that kind of stuff," he says. "I wanted to find something unique that

would only get made if I pushed it. Then my company's head of development saw *In The Company of Men* at the Sundance Festival and thought it was one of the most interesting things there. I had a print flown out to Los Angeles, really liked it, asked Neil if he had any other scripts and he showed me *Your Friends & Neighbors*, which I found even more audacious than the first one."

"This all happened months

from the director of 'in the company of men'



a film by neil labute
your friends&neighbors
a modern immorality tale

STARTS TOMORROW ODEON CINEMA CITY RIVIERA

7 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
INCLUDING
BEST PICTURE BEST DIRECTOR BEST ACTOR

"A GENUINELY REMARKABLE FILM AS POWERFUL, MOVING AND CAPABLE OF INDELIBLY ETCHING ITSELF ON THE BRAIN AS SCHINDLER'S LIST."
EMPIRE

"BENIGNI IS BRILLIANT. THE FILM IS FANTASTIC."
THE TIMES

"MAGNIFICENT"
SIGHT & SOUND

"WONDERFUL"
THE GUARDIAN

A FABLE BY ROBERTO BENIGNI

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (LA VITA È BELLA)

STARS TOMORROW

ODEON CINEMA CITY RIVIERA

AND AT SELECTED CINEMAS NATIONWIDE FROM FEBRUARY 12TH

Wham,
line the best
war movie ever
live webcast

At heart, it's no laughing matter

NEW MOVIES: Roberto Benigni's concentration camp comedy *Life is Beautiful* is clever, witty — and nauseating, says James Christopher

Some things are impossible to get away with in the cinema: snuff movies and the glory years of *Patrick Thistle FC* spring to mind. But a comedy about the Holocaust? With \$90 million of foreign box office in its pocket and a sackful of gongs — including the Best Jewish Experience Award at the Jerusalem International Film Festival and a host of Oscar nominations (see panel, below right) — Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (*La Vita è Bella*) appears to have done just that.

At the centre of Benigni's fable — written, directed by and starring himself — is a clown, Guido, who has a way with cars that makes Chaplin or Keaton look like driving instructors. For the first 50 minutes after arriving in the Tuscan town of Arezzo circa 1939, Guido's life is one long, wonderful series of slapstick accidents that work romantic miracles in his favour. With his goofy face, rubbery Italian wit and even more rubbery physical skills, Benigni is a charming one-man blizzard of gags involving eggs, hats and flower pots. He charms a local school teacher (Nicoletta Braschi), the fiancée of the Fascist town clerk, and then sweeps her off on horseback during her posh engagement dinner. So far, so frothy.

We fast forward to the last year of the war, and the film suddenly lurches from a comedy about love into comedy about survival. Guido and the teacher are married. They have a five-year-old son, Joshua, and the Nazis are carting Jews off to concentration camps. Guido and Joshua are duly arrested, and Braschi, although not Jewish, duly follows.

Masking his fears, Benigni's Guido pretends that the death camp is a light-hearted game. If Joshua stays out of sight of Nazi soldiers, they will amass enough points to win their very own tank. Magic surrealism is replaced by a surreal lie. And Guido's efforts to maintain that lie become as tortuously ridiculous as Joshua's luck in not being discovered. Guido jolies his son through the filth and degradation. He gets a job in the officers' mess and plays romantic music to his wife across the compound. Everywhere, the grim reality is thwarted by Guido's dazzling *chutzpah*.

Benigni's eloquently put point is that imagination can conquer any horror. It is genuinely conceivable that people survived concentration camps by denying what was happening to them, or that they made up alternative, even more ludicrous, realities to stop themselves going insane. But to regard laughter as a cure-all seems as appropriate as juggling decapitated heads at the scene of a motorway pile-up. The real problem with Benigni's inclusion of the Holocaust is that it never convinces for a second that it is anything more than a dramatic device — a tool to unlock a sentimental melodrama of family values. The film is undeniably moving, and beautifully shot. But it is also undeniably, and nauseatingly, manipulative.

Neil LaBute's comedy of manners, *Your Friends & Neighbors*, is no less manipulative than Benigni's fable. But the ugly truths on sale here are cleverly distilled from the sex-

Life is Beautiful
UCI Whiteleys
PG, 116 mins
Romantic fable stitches a disturbing comedy into the Holocaust

Your Friends & Neighbors
Virgin Haymarket
18, 100 mins
Withering, sex-obsessed comedy of manners

Switchblade Sisters
ABC Piccadilly
18, 90 mins
Re-release of cult film about teenage delinquents

Don't Go Breaking My Heart
ABC Shaftesbury Ave
PG, 93 mins
Quirky Valentine comedy

Jack Frost
Warner Village West End, PG, 102 mins
Michael Keaton comes to life as a snowman

My Giant
Local venues only
PG, 104 mins
Sleazy agent Billy Crystal discovers a Romanian giant

Hôtel Du Nord
ABC Swiss Centre
PG, 110 mins
Marcel Carné's bitter-sweet 1938 classic

al anxieties of six yuppie thirty-somethings, and then injected back into their lives like some kind of truth drug.

Two gaudy, well-heeled couples chip away at each other during a dinner party, and then give their partners hell in bed. Aaron Eckhart's far Barry can't please his wife, Mary (Amy Brenneman) so he pleases himself. Ben Stiller's drama teacher, Jerry — an unholy blend of Woody Allen and Tom Cruise — is too noisy for his wife, Terri, and too neurotic to carry off an affair. The fabulously bored Terri (Catherine Keener) meets a gallery assistant (Nastassja Kinski) and promptly falls into bed with her. And Jason Patric's loose cannon, Cary, is the Norman Bates of misogyny.

It's a merry-go-round of nasty clashes in bookshops, restaurants, steam-rooms and bedrooms. They obsess about their limp sex-lives and needle each other for their most lurid sexual experiences. They behave very badly indeed, but they are as oddly sympathetic as they are despicably selfish.



Oddly sympathetic as well as despicably selfish: the bed-hopping thirty-somethings of *Friends & Neighbors*



Guido the clown (Roberto Benigni) in *Life is Beautiful*: "To regard laughter as a cure-all for horror seems as appropriate here as juggling decapitated heads at the scene of a motorway pile-up"

They are, after all, our friends and neighbours.

Like his uncompromising first feature, *In the Company of Men*, LaBute's film is intensely theatrical. The icing is the toothy close-ups, the unscrupulous outing of secrets, and the thinly disguised fact that they need each others' insecurities as much as they hate each other for them. Cynical? Sure. But it knocks the stuffing out of Ally McBeal.

For similar reasons you can see why Quentin Tarantino is in awe of Jack Hill and his 1975 flick, *Switchblade Sisters*. Pulpier than *Pulp Fiction*, swaggingly trashy and shamelessly clichéd, the film cultivates an almost Victorian fear of acne-clad juvenile delinquents. Here a gang of suspiciously old-looking teenage girls — all studs, eyepatches and sullen stares — terrifies Seagrove's head to get her into bed, which backfire.

Seagrove not only makes a fantastic but endearing fool of herself, but holds the film together too. Glacially beautiful, comically confused, she blunders from one date to the next not knowing what might pop out of her mouth. That it all ends in cheery tears makes one peculiarly grateful.

Despite the presence of Michael Keaton, *Jack Frost* has the commercial lifespan of a snowball in the desert. Keaton dies in a car accident on

bad it's embarrassing, and so embarrassing that it's hilarious. The joy is never knowing how far Hill has his tongue in his cheek. You couldn't hope to get away with this hysterical bad taste in 1999. And for that, I guess, we should be grateful.

The Valentine groove is Willi Patterson's *Don't Go Breaking My Heart*. It's not great, but it's lovely. Shot around the nooks and crannies of Hampstead, the film plots a quirky romance between Jenny Seagrove's beautifully preserved single mum and Billy Crystal's crashes his car in Romania and is saved by the 7ft 6in Max (George Muresan). Big-heeled Max hauls from a monastery stuck in the Middle Ages. The diminutive sleazeball hails from an armchair in Los Angeles. There's no real contest. The payoff is that Crystal will reunite Max with a long-lost childhood sweetheart in exchange for a string of ultra-bad movie parts. Humiliation doesn't come much uglier than this.

Fifty years have not dimmed Marcel Carné's 1938 classic, *Hôtel du Nord*. Rarely has the desire for death seemed so everyday and yet so poetically eloquent. A pair of dapper young lovers check into a hotel intent on committing suicide. Walking up in hospital, Anna-Bella discovers her lover has done a runner. It's the cynical, hard-bitten rogues next door who steal the film, though. Louis Jouvet, a priceless unaffected actor, and Arlette, a tart with rusty heart, are wilfully seduced by the purity of the death wish. Valentines may find the pessimism of Jacques Prévert's script too existential for comfort. I find it turns an honest key. The prewar fatalism is at wonderful odds with the smoky atmosphere of Alexandre Trauner's brilliant studio sets: the shabby hotel, the inky canal. Paris has rarely seemed so dowdy.

Christmas Eve and comes back to life as a snowman to spend some quality time with his son. "Why me? Why like this?" wails the lumpy-faced snowman, drifting about his family's front yard as if there's a hovercraft in his undercarriage. Glenn Hoddle would put it down to bad karma. Others would be less charitable.

From one huge flake to another. In Michael Lehmann's *My Giant*, a seddy talent scout (Billy Crystal) crashes his car in Romania and is saved by the 7ft 6in Max (George Muresan). Big-heeled Max hauls from a monastery stuck in the Middle Ages. The diminutive sleazeball hails from an armchair in Los Angeles. There's no real contest. The payoff is that Crystal will reunite Max with a long-lost childhood sweetheart in exchange for a string of ultra-bad movie parts. Humiliation doesn't come much uglier than this.

Fifty years have not dimmed Marcel Carné's 1938 classic, *Hôtel du Nord*. Rarely has the desire for death seemed so everyday and yet so poetically eloquent. A pair of dapper young lovers check into a hotel intent on committing suicide. Walking up in hospital, Anna-Bella discovers her lover has done a runner. It's the cynical, hard-bitten rogues next door who steal the film, though. Louis Jouvet, a priceless unaffected actor, and Arlette, a tart with rusty heart, are wilfully seduced by the purity of the death wish. Valentines may find the pessimism of Jacques Prévert's script too existential for comfort. I find it turns an honest key. The prewar fatalism is at wonderful odds with the smoky atmosphere of Alexandre Trauner's brilliant studio sets: the shabby hotel, the inky canal. Paris has rarely seemed so dowdy.

THE MAIN OSCAR NOMINATIONS

BEST PICTURE: Elizabeth, *Life is Beautiful*, Saving Private Ryan, Shakespeare in Love, *The Thin Red Line*.

ACTOR: Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*; Tom Hanks, *Saving Private Ryan*; Ian McKellen, *Gods and Monsters*; Edward Norton, *American History X*.

ACTRESS: Cate Blanchett, *Elizabeth*; Fernanda Montenegro, *Central Station*; Gwyneth Paltrow, *Shakespeare in Love*; Meryl Streep, *One True Thing*; Emily Watson, *Hilary and Jackie*.

SUPPORTING ACTOR: James Coburn, *Affection*; Robert Duvall, *A Civil Action*; Ed Harris, *The Truman Show*.

SUPPORTING ACTRESS: Judi Dench, *Shakespeare in Love*; Rachel Griffiths, *Hilary and Jackie*; Lynn Redgrave, *Gods and Monsters*.

DIRECTOR: Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*; Steven Spielberg, *Saving Private Ryan*; John Madden, *Shakespeare in Love*; Terrence Malick, *The Thin Red Line*; Peter Weir, *The Truman Show*.

FOREIGN FILM: *Central Station* (Brazil); *Children of Heaven* (Iran); *The Grandfather* (Spain); *Life is Beautiful* (Italy); *Tango* (Argentina).

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY: Warren Beatty and Jeremy Pikser, *Bulworth*; Vincenzo Cerami and Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*; Robert Rodat, *Saving Private Ryan*; Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*; Andrew Niccol, *The Truman Show*.

Vincenzo Cerami and Roberto Benigni, *Life is Beautiful*; Robert Rodat, *Saving Private Ryan*; Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*; Andrew Niccol, *The Truman Show*; CINEMATOGRAPHY: A Civil Action, *Elizabeth*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *The Thin Red Line*; ORIGINAL SONG: *I Don't Want to Miss a Thing* from *Armageddon* (Diane Warren); *The Prayer* from *Quest for Camelot* (Carole Bayer Sager, David Finster, Tony Renis, Alberto Testa); *A Soft Place to Fall* from *The Horse Whisperer* (Alison Moore and Civil Owen); *That'll Do* from *Bab's Pig in the City* (Randy Newman); *When You Believe* from *The Prince of Egypt* (Stephen Schwartz).

Wham, bam, thank you, Bruce

■ ARMAGEDDON

Buena Vista, 12, 1998
IF THE world had to be saved from destruction by a hurtling asteroid, would you send up Bruce Willis and a surly team of former convicts, testos-one specials and jokers? This thundering blockbuster does, and turns the prospect of the world's imminent annihilation into a great excuse for a

soupied-up video game. You can rent the film now on video, or buy it on DVD; the latter format gives you marvellous sound and a dazzlingly crisp image, especially so when clouds, fire and debris swirl around, although you do have to flip over the disc half way through to see Bruce and his merry crew actually do save mankind as we know it.

■ NEW VIDEO RELEASES

■ THE AVENGERS

Warner, 12, 1998
AFTER all the kerfuffle kicked up by its sneaky cinema debut behind critics' backs, now is the time to re-evaluate this updated revamp of the cult TV series. Unfortunately, nothing much has changed. The two leads, Ralph Fiennes and Uma Thurman, are still charmless, the script still feeble, and Sean Connery still wastes our time and his as the arch villain, trying to bring the world to its knees by mucking about with the weather. Renting the film for home viewing, though, is a painless and cheap way to find out what the fuss was about.

part it is awkwardly put together by surfer/director George Greenough, but the final 25 minutes turn up trumps with what we used to call a "mind-blowing" visual sequence, synchronised to Pink Floyd's *Echoes*. Equipped with a specially developed boat and camera lens, Greenough sails right through the innards of rolling waves — a hypnotic spectacle, but not one for the seasick.

■ DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID

Front, 15, 1945
SHELTERING in Hollywood during the Second World War, the great Jean Renoir revisited his homeland in this fascinating, pell-mell version of Octave Mirbeau's novel about a grasping chambermaid (later filmed in the 1960s by Luis Buñuel, with Jeanne Moreau). Through a nervous oscillation between burlesque and tragedy, Renoir exposes the disruptive forces within French society, and gives his performers a

field day. Paulette Goddard's brashness, Hurd Hatfield's languorous good looks, Burgess Meredith's streak of whimsy: all are admirably deployed.

■ METROLAND

Fox Pathé, 18, 1998
THAT déjà vu feeling steals over you as Philip Saville's adaptation of Julian Barnes's first novel chugs along. It's the late 1970s, give or take several flashbacks, and the staid suburban lives of Christian Bale and Emily Watson get a shake-up with the arrival of Bale's boyhood friend (Lee Ross), who shared a dream that they would never turn bourgeois. Decent enough performances, but the cramped, literary feel does not generate the most exciting cinema — something that will matter less when viewed on a TV screen, the film's natural home.

GEOFF BROWN

((is the thin red line the best war movie ever?))
live webscussions nowwww in progress

www.friendfactory.co.uk
rent and rave for free

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE

MUSIC BY STEPHEN WARFELLS FROM THE MIRAMAX MOTION PICTURE

The perfect gift
for your love
this Valentines Day

Compact Disc
available from

MEGASTORES

Sony Classical
10 Great Marlborough St, London, W1V 2LP
www.sonyclassical.com



OSI 1200 1024P

LISTINGS

Mojo staged in Sheffield

ARTS

THE TIMES THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 1999

THEATRE

Mostly Fascinating Aida

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mart Hargreaves

LONDON

THE RIOT: Co-production with Kneehigh Company. In Mick-Darke's new play, set at the turn of the century, the army is brought in to quell the rioting between two towns. Costelloe (0171-522 3000). Opens tonight, runs 5 weeks.

VIENNA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Not quite the Proms, but a very good one, the Vienna SO under Vladimir Fedoseyev plays London a welcome visit. A popular programme comprises Johann Strauss's Tales from the Vienna Woods; Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20; and Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Arturo Pizzi is the piano soloist. Barbican (0171-638 6891). Tonight, 7.30pm. £30.

ROYAL GALA CONCERT: International stars James Galway, Mstislav Rostropovich, Yo-Yo Ma, join the London Mozart Players under Matthias Bamert in a celebration of the chamber orchestra's 50th anniversary. Recitals of piano and an evening of soloists. Solo programme is John Woolrich's Concerto for Orchestra, an anniversary commission. Festival Hall (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 7pm. £30.

SHREK: The musical version of the cartoon film. At the Lyric, Hammersmith, with the London Mozart Players under Matthias Bamert in a celebration of the chamber orchestra's 50th anniversary. Recitals of piano and an evening of soloists. Solo programme is John Woolrich's Concerto for Orchestra, an anniversary commission. Festival Hall (0171-960 4242). Tonight, 7pm. £30.

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London
■ House full, returns only □ Some seats available □ Seats at all prices

BAREFACED CHIC: Fascinating. Ada may have to move before seeing it in this latest tour. This time Clarke Peters directs. See review, right. Theatre Royal (0171-630 8800). £5.

THE RAPE OF LUCRECE: Thrilling staging of Shakespeare's poem by Tim Shollen's Angels. Ada's company of six plus sensational erotic music. Union Chapel (0171-538 3436).

SARA: Patrick Miller's treatment of Chekhov's Ivanov, focusing on the struggles of the hero's Jewish wife. Bridge (0171-538 3436).

COPENHAGEN: Robert Bohrberg my first time in Copenhagen. Nils Bohr in worn-out Denmark. Michael Frayn's intelligent play transfers to the West End. Michael Blakemore directs. Duchess (0171-494 5079).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

HIDEOUS KINKY (15) Kate Winslet plays a naive young maid who takes her employer's son on a trip to Mexico in the early 1970s. Beautiful shot film with Sadie Tangherlini, Bela Ruzic, Carrie Mulligan.

LIVING OUT LOUD (15) Fine romance with Holly Hunter and Danny DeVito. An odd couple who meet in the electric chair and then plot to unlock the stalemate. Director, Richard LaGravenese.

HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK (15) Successful career woman Angie Bassey fails for a Jamaican boy (Taye Diggs), half her age. Utterly engaging, funny production from director, Rodarte.

A BUG'S LIFE (U) A colony of cut-hair-winged ants are tormented by a dastardly gang of grasshoppers. Disney's bug-eyed perspectives from Disney and Pixar. John Lasseter directs.

PECKER (15) John Waters' frothy satire on an art world lacks its usual bite but there are enough bad-taste

HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY: On Broadway he's known for putting on a musical revue, emphasis on wacky costumes and difficult performers. Arts Theatre (0171-836 3324). Previews from tonight, 8pm. Opens Mon.

DIALOGUES DES CARMELITES: Trinity College of Music pays its centenary tribute to Poulenc with a singing tribute to the controversial work of mathematics and hope. The conductor is Andrea Quint. Kremerata Baltica directs. Spitalfields Market Opera, E1 (0171-377 1362). Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

ELSEWHERE

LANCASTER: The noted mezzo Amanda Roocroft gives a recital of Italian, French and German songs and Wolf followed by songs by Debussy. With Malcolm Martineau, piano. Lancaster University (01524 883729). Tonight, 7.30pm. £5.

SHREK: Mojo is Jez Butterworth's mounting weird and wonderful rock'n'roll fable deadly rivalry. Deborah Page directs. Crucible (0114 2769522). Opens tonight, 8pm. £20.



Ian McKellen (Prospero), Paul Bhattacharjee (Ariel) and Claudiu Blakley (Miranda)

I found myself liking this show less and less the longer I had to wait for it to begin. By the time the wannabe-celebs tore their fatuous selves away from the lobby and bars, and decided to shuffle towards their seats, 25 minutes had gone by since this had been an overnight review the second half would have got short shrift, and I felt in a mood to give the first half a shrift of similar brevity.

But this would have been unfair since the delays were not the fault of the Fascinating Aida trio. Behind the curtain they were probably tearing their hair — Dilly Keane's longish blonde, Adèle Anderson's brûlée, and Issy van Randwyck's blonde with a yellow flower on top.

Ironically, the first view we had of the girls showed them making themselves up in front of pretend dressing-room mirrors, fine-tuning dance routines and breaking into song with

Trips and trills**Barefaced Chic**
Theatre Royal

half an hour to go before being on "stage". They remained at their mirrors till the interval when, finally acknowledging the gathering panic in the voice of the tannoy, they rushed off for their opening number, ie, back to their actual dressing rooms, while the wannabes set off for the bars again.

Well, this made an interesting de-

parture from their more familiar procedure, where Adèle and Issy would sing and prance about the place while Dilly parked herself at the pi-

ano and joined in from there. The contribution of Clarke Peters as director this time round shows itself in the nifty movement of the dances — between the dances too, when the girls switch position or go whirling and sliding around the stage.

The subjects of their songs — all the lyrics written by themselves and the music by Dilly — are much as usually comments on the cultural scene, rueblo observations on growing old.

"Rows" and "rows/Of perfect men/Heaven knows/That was then...". Subjects include wannabe confessors on the Jerry Springer show, pick'n'mix New Agists, new Labour, new drugs — Viagra today, tobacco yesterday. One good thing about them is they don't dumb down, so if you miss a ref-

erence, well, others won't and you may catch the next one. "Señor da Gama, known as Vasco/Has sold our hero some tabsco." Issy, like a china doll with a cheek-defying smile. Adèle lofty and likely to peep down her long nose, Dilly putting on the Miss Prim air or singing with a seethe in her heart — these are the characters they mostly turn to in their songs. Thus Issy emerges as a Monica, Adèle as Linda T with her finger on the tape-recorder, and Dilly?

Let that stay as a surprise. *The Beetroot Song* doesn't work, and one or two others tail away, like the beetroot's roots. The music relies comfortingly on *Forbes/Filberts* styles, mostly light, but then from out of the jokes comes the hymn-like melody of *Flowers in Winter*, led by Issy's angelically pure soprano, and the heart melts.

JEREMY KINGSTON

When John Gielgud played Prospero, it was as if the balding Bard were making a graceful farewell to the stage. Ian McKellen, whom many regard as his natural successor, looks more like a blend of Ben Gunn and Worzel Gummidge: grey grizzled, weary pour, battered grey cardigan, tattered brown breeches above bare legs, yokel's hat, ancient brogues. You don't doubt that Prospero has spent 12 years marooned on an island, but you do also wonder why he hasn't used his magic to improve his standard of living.

So when McKellen entered with his splintered bamboo staff, smelly old book and squashed-doll fetishes, trudged past an antiquated sofa, and proceeded to ignite nightlights stuck on a ring of small rocks, I half-expecting West Yorkshire Playhouse's *The Tempest* to be transformed into the forlorn fantasy of an ageing bum. I have seen that he did try this before, as I recall by John Woodvine and the English Shakespeare Company, and it did not work well. So it was a relief to find that Jude Kelly's production was more indebted to the conventions of rough theatre. The plastic sheeting everywhere on display was not part of a dream. We were supposed to

imagine that it was a stormy sky. Prospero's robe, even the gorgeous gowns with which he tricks the fashion-conscious Stephano and Trinculo. Since the impression is rather of the sort of mags old women wear on wet days at Blackpool, my imagination gibbed a bit at that, as it did at the plastic coconuts from the movie *Coma* or the film *Alien* in which Juno and her fellow-goddesses appear. But I must admit that the ugliness of it all did not greatly mar a lively evening. There are performers who, it's said, cannot act their way out of a paper bag. I can now report that there are also actors who can perform very nicely inside a plastic one, and that Sir Ian is one of them.

His performance is not yet finished, thought-out, fell-out thing — it may take another, less eccentric production for him to achieve that — but it will more than do. This Prospero is as life-battered as he's weather-beaten, a wryly disillusioned old ironist who still feels anger at his foes but does not need Ariel to tell him he must show pity to them.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Song birds: Issy van Randwyck, Adèle Anderson and Dilly Keane

OPERA & BALLET**TREATS**

ALMIRA AT THE ALBERT

DOUBT 0171 632 0300 (24hr)

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA

Tonight 7.30 (LAST PERFORM)

The Box Office, Tower 7.30, LA TRAVATA

SADIE WELLS

DTW 0800 20000

Barbican Royal Ballet

A Gala Ball, 10.30 Feb

Tony Blair, David Bradley,

Karen Gómez

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

£100

■ OPERA

Making of a Parsifal

Kim's game of chances

He's an actor, you know, a colleague whispered to me when I first spotted the tenor Kim Begley 15 or so years ago as a student at the National Opera Studio. And indeed he was. Long before his Achilles in *King Priam* and Cassio in *Otello* at Covent Garden, before his Janáček at Glyndebourne, before Lohengrin, Siegmund and, now, the title role in the new *Parsifal* which opens at English National Opera on Saturday, Kim Begley had trodden the boards as everyone's favourite White Rabbit, as Flute the bellows-mender at Stratford, and much more besides.

"It was all I ever wanted to be: at 18 I muscled my way into the wardrobe department of Chester's Gateway Theatre, got myself a place on the costume course at the Wimbledon School of Art, understudied and acted all over London, then spent two years with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the late 1970s. That was in the days of Trevor Nunn – when everything he touched turned to gold."

Including Begley. His next break was being spotted by Rudolf Piernay from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama while playing the villain in a *Robinson Crusoe* panto. He clearly heard the tenor potential within Begley's basso profundo, and told him about Arts Council bursaries for actors who wanted to be singers. Begley took a crash course in theory, piano and voice at the Guildhall and, within a year, Covent Garden had offered him a principal's contract on condition he study for a year at the National Opera Studio.

"I realised then that opera was the most perfect, the most complete form of theatre there was. And I was totally in awe of my colleagues. They were all younger than I was, but I couldn't read music and had no languages. I had to learn incredibly quickly. A lot of bluffing went on, I can tell you."

Six seasons and 30 roles later, Begley left the Royal Opera and began to work with Nikolaus Lehnhoff on Glyndebourne's great Janáček cycle. He had found his professional soul-mate. "Lehnhoff was the

OPERA:
Hilary Finch
charts the tenor
Kim Begley's
rise from panto
to Parsifal

person who opened the international doors for me." And though it lay Wagner, "He offered me Lohengrin in Frankfurt, and I went for it, because I could trust him." After that came Loge in Cologne and Milan, Siegmund at Covent Garden – and now Parsifal, again directed by Lehnhoff.

What's so special about working with Lehnhoff? "He comes to the first rehearsal with everything worked out in meticulous detail, like a film script. His method doesn't suit everyone. But it gives you such a secure foundation that you

'I couldn't read music and had no languages. I had to learn incredibly quickly'

then have the freedom to develop your own performance. He works in a very visual way, focusing on your body language, on your relationship to everyone else on stage. And that, after all, is what hits an audience first."

So what of Begley's own performance? Parsifal is, after all, the Holy Grail of tenor roles. What is required of him is nothing less than the portrayal of an archetype of human spiritual experience: the long journey of the "innocent fool", the unknown boy from the forest whose mission is to heal the wound of the dying king Amfortas and, through acquiring the knowl-

edge of guilt, responsibility and compassion, to restore the healing power of the Grail. The orphaned simpleton becomes the redeemer redeemed. How does Begley prepare himself?

"I don't prepare! It must be the actor in me. I just approach it with a blank sheet of paper. It all comes in rehearsal. Of course, the difference with opera is that the music doesn't give you that total freedom. I spend all my time simply learning how to sing the score. You hear two things about the role of Parsifal: that it's very low, and that it's very short. Well, it may be short – just 25 minutes in an evening of nearly six hours – but it's intensely concentrated. And Wagner wrote it very precisely for a tenor, and knew exactly what he was doing. The choice and placing of every word in every phrase counts."

How then, does Begley feel about singing it in English? "Mark Elder, who is conducting, is of course a passionate advocate of it. But I had to be honest and say, from day one, that I feel it's too big a compromise. Richard Stokes's translation is a tremendous achievement; there's no doubt about that. But it's simply not possible to reproduce all the vowels, stresses and inflection so meticulously chosen by Wagner. And, in my personal view, with surtitles and with much better educated audiences, it's not necessary today, either."

So Begley returns to the score, close-focuses on Parsifal and his blissful ignorance. "Instant communication is essential. It's a long evening and people need to feel that raw energy, to see me wringing my hands, not analyse why I'm wringing them. The more you internalise, the less you communicate. And if you don't learn how to cope with the emotional force of the music in rehearsal, you're done for in performance. When I first listened to it, I just broke down every time. The sheer intensity of the music is disturbing enough. But then, to think you are going to sing it! That's a privilege which can simply never be over-estimated."

• Parsifal opens at 4pm on Saturday at the Coliseum (0271 632 8300).

ARTS

■ CLASSICAL CDS

The Geisha revived

East on tour

CLIVE BARDA



WHAT'S in a name? This *Tosca* was originally billed as from the "Mussorgsky (former May) Theatre of St Petersburg", then as the "Chisinau National Opera", which – for the geographically challenged – turns out to be our old friends the Moldovan National Opera, plus guest soloists from the former Soviet Union.

There is also something very right about an opera performance sandwiched between *Carmen* and *Goodness Gracious Me* in the last London theatre with a genuine community audience. The fact that Matcham's masterpiece has been denied a lottery grant still makes me seethe, and with hindsight this is where the Royal Opera should have spent its exile. Then the audience would have heard even better opera.

Mournful magic

POP

erful explorations of old-fashioned themes such as sin and redemption, with titles like *I'm Not Afraid to Die* and *The Devil Had a Hold of Me*.

On *My Morphine*, a tale of utter wretchedness, Welch let out a yodel that was quite possibly the most lonesome sound ever heard inside a concert venue. Like a howl, it seemed to come from a place beyond words. For her first encore she sang the semi-autobiographical *Orphan Girl*, which was also covered by Emmylou Harris. Called back twice more, she unfurled understated versions of *Jesus On The Mainline* and *Long Black Veil* during which you could have heard a pin drop.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



Fool's progress: Kim Begley sings Parsifal in Nikolaus Lehnhoff's new production for ENO

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: *A Butterfly* eight years early; and songs by a fine young German baritone

MUSICAL

■ JONES
The Geisha
Watson/Walker/Maltman/
Koc/Sturt/New London
Light Orch/Corp
Hyperion CDA67006 ★★
£14.99

SIDNEY Jones got in first, beating Puccini by eight years. Naval encounters with Japanese ladies are the subject of both *Madama Butterfly* and *The Geisha*. There the similarities end. Jones's officers from the HMS *Turtle* are British to the core, excellently sung by Christopher Maltman and Joëlle Koc, and, after their dalliances they both do the right thing and return to their first loves.

Hyperion has done excellent service in resurrecting a musical which had a two-year run in London a century ago and is now virtually forgotten. Jones wrote brief, catchy numbers, scarcely ever exceeding the three-minute mark. The son of a bandmaster, he drew his inspiration as much from the ditties of the music hall as from G & S, who were still ruling the musical roost, not least with *The Mikado*.

Lilian Watson gives Mimosa, the geisha, all the grace and the name demands. She is well matched by Sarah Walker, the girl who pulls her fiancé back on to the straight and narrow. To her go two comic songs, one about a monkey on a stick (which Jones did not write) and the other about a parrot, clearly a close relative of tit-willow. Richard Sturt has the best of several gloriously non-PC numbers, including *Chin Chin Chinaman*. Jolly place, Jones's Japan.

■ BEETHOVEN
Songs
Genz/Vignoles
Hyperion CDA 67055 ★★★
£14.99

AS WE have to wait until June for the young German baritone Stephan Genz to sing live in London, it's good to see this new release of Beethoven songs which arrives in time to join the celebrations of Goethe's 250th birthday this year.

The 26-year-old Genz is in the first bloom of his youthful prime, and Beethoven's setting of Goethe's *Mailed*, with its lightly breathed, springing words, could have been written with Genz himself in mind. Roger Vignoles is Genz's regular accompanist, and the two of them find an irresistible bounding energy for one of Beethoven's most spontaneous songs, *Neue Liebe, neues Leben*; and they have a good nibble at the wit of the flea-song *Aus Goethes Faust*.

This generous recital, which also includes six Geller settings that look ahead to Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*, concludes with Genz's beautifully paced performance of Beethoven's pioneering song-cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, one song modulating exquisitely into another in Vignoles's piano playing.

VOCAL

■ BEETHOVEN
Songs
Genz/Vignoles
Hyperion CDA 67055 ★★★
£14.99

AS WE have to wait until June for the young German baritone Stephan Genz to sing live in London, it's good to see this new release of Beethoven songs which arrives in time to join the celebrations of Goethe's 250th birthday this year.

The 26-year-old Genz is in the first bloom of his youthful prime, and Beethoven's setting of Goethe's *Mailed*, with its lightly breathed, springing words, could have been written with Genz himself in mind. Roger Vignoles is Genz's regular accompanist, and the two of them find an irresistible bounding energy for one of Beethoven's most spontaneous songs, *Neue Liebe, neues Leben*; and they have a good nibble at the wit of the flea-song *Aus Goethes Faust*.

This generous recital, which also includes six Geller settings that look ahead to Brahms's *Four Serious Songs*, concludes with Genz's beautifully paced performance of Beethoven's pioneering song-cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, one song modulating exquisitely into another in Vignoles's piano playing.

HILARY FINCH

* Worth hearing
** Worth considering
*** Worth buying

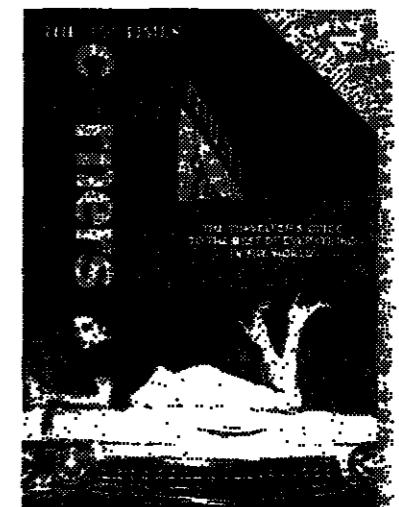
CDS reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

JOHN HIGGINS

30p



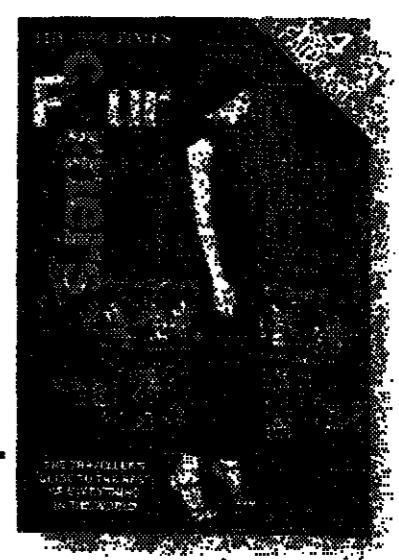
THE TIMES



BE A TRAVELLER, NOT A TOURIST.



Four Corners.
The four part travel guide
to the places tourists don't go to.
Collect part two,
free in *The Times* this Saturday.



<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

CHANGING TIMES

To subscribe today call FREE on 0800 026 25 24
For the form on 0171 477 3522
Post this coupon to EPS (Dept TW09), PO Box 2712,
London W1A 5AU (CAPITAL PRESS)
Surname _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Tel _____
I enclose a cheque (made out to 'EPS') for £_____
Please debit my VISA/MASTERCARD/AMEX/SWITCH/DEBIT card _____
Card Number _____
Expiry Date _____ / Issue Number _____ Date _____
Signature _____
* Applies to UK subscriptions only. For Europe add £0.50. Elsewhere add £12.50.

EN O
La traviata
Verdi
Jonathan Miller's immaculate production. This is a Traveller to die for!
Observer

February 12 | 16
19 | 22 | 25
March 2 | 5 | 11 at 7.30pm
Tickets from £5 - £55
Box Office
0171 632 8300
24 hours

<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

BOOKS



The bard of the big screen

THE TESTAMENT
By John Grisham
Century, £16.99
ISBN 0 7126 7826 3

ONE day some postgraduate with time, money and little sense of how to utilise either, will write a thesis entitled *Allusions to King Lear in the work of John Grisham*. In Grisham's latest thriller, *The Testament*, a self-made billionaire called Troy Phelan is wheelchair-bound. Increasingly reclusive, he is living to die, while his children are metaphorically tugging at his beard and waiting to get their paws on his assets. Sounds familiar? Of course the likeness between Grisham and Shakespeare does not stop there. Both are the current darlings of Hollywood and this infuriatingly addictive tale has blockbuster sprawled all over it.

A last word

PURE DRIVE
By Steve Martin
Penguin, £9.99
ISBN 0 670 88521 5

MANY of these "after-dinner mints to the big meal of literature" are reminiscences and fragments of scripts published by Tim Brown in *The New Yorker*. Martin, better known for his goofy roles in *Roxanne* and *Father of the Bride* than for his television writing and stage-plays, gently teases with musings such as *Lolita at Fifty* and *The Paparazzi of Plato*. The rogue interviewer Dennis Pennis once asked Martin: "Heh, Steve, why aren't you funny any more?" Almost two years after the awkward silence that followed that very public poking, this may be Martin's winning retort.

Small detail

TAKING DOREEN OUT OF THE SKY STORIES
By Alan Beard
Picador, £6.99
ISBN 0 330 37192 4

ALAN BEARD has produced a collection of stories set in the West Midlands that touches and tickles. But it is not always the main characters that enchant in his stories of ordinary and extraordinary lives. In the title talk about the closing of a steelworks in Birmingham, it is the faces we see as we look over the narrator's shoulders that are most affecting. "Through the leafless branches of a street tree I noticed this man drag something out of a house. It turned out to be a woman, she was kicking, he pulled." Beard revels in the details of working-class life and manages to slip in important contemporary references points – the "socials", the Bull Ring Centre and Fat Willy's anoraks – without being preachy, heavy-handed or self-consciously populist.

ALEX O'CONNELL

A vast monument to plain good sense

**Novelist, essayist and satirist:
Gore Vidal's versatility is a reader's delight, but an editor's nightmare**

Harold Acton found him "aggressively handsome", as Gore Vidal characteristically notes in his memoir, *Palimpsest*, published in 1995. Acton was right; and Vidal is so even now, gazing into his eighth decade and peering coolly out at us from the burnished cover of this book. We only get the gaze of one eye – the other's iris is truncated by text – but it is no less penetrating for being Cyclopean. If it were not ungentlemanly to do so, and Vidal has always been a gentleman, he seems to be issuing a dare: "Argue with me if you can." He seems to know he'll come out on top.

Who is like Gore Vidal? Swift, perhaps; or Mark Twain, or Henry James. He is a novelist, satirist, essayist, playwright, even – like Dickens – an actor. He was born at West Point: his grandfather was a senator from Tennessee. T. P. Gore, blind from the age of two and to whom his grandson would read by the hour. Amelia Earhart was his father's lover. Eleanor Roosevelt a family friend. He made his own ventures into politics. He seems to have known everyone; if we can't quite always believe what he says about them, well, that's just

part of his mischievous charm. He is serious but never sententious, and – rare quality – unafraid to say what he thinks. There is no one quite like him, and if you do not know his work you should. So this fat anthology of Vidal's work – nearly 1,000 pages – poses the reviewer's problem.

Fred Kaplan is its doughty editor. Kaplan has written biographies of Dickens, James and Carlyle; he is now at work on still-very-much-with-us Vidal, with his subject's full co-operation. Kaplan, in trying to present "the essential" Vidal, has set himself a tough task. Vidal is nothing if not prolific; how to squeeze a dollar each of 23 novels, a collection of short stories, five plays and 12 works of non-fiction into a single book? The historical novels – *Burr*, *Lincoln*, *Hollywood* among them – are very different in tone from what he has called his "inventions", which include *Myra*

Breckenridge and his latest novel, *The Smithsonian Institution*. The histories render the Vidian vision of America's past: the inventions offer surreal satire on the present. There are the religious novels – one of which, *Live from Golgotha*, made Saints Paul and Timothy rather more than just good friends, televised the Crucifixion, and caused predictable outrage.

It is a sentiment that cannot be

strange to Vidal. His novel *The City and the Pillar*, appearing in 1948 shortly before the Kinsey Report, was one of the first published in the mainstream to deal openly with male homosexuality – damned by many critics, it nevertheless became a bestseller. For some years afterwards, *The New York Times*, among others, refused to review his work. Yet he always prevailed – continued to live as a writer, which is all that counts. On top of all this he is a truly great essayist: author-

tative, intimate but never casual, busy rocking the boat with every ear at his disposal. So how to encompass all this?

It can seem unfair to question an editor's choice of an author's work. Everything is not relative; but literature is still a matter of taste, and Kaplan cannot be blamed for deciding, say, that *Duluth* – an invention of 1983 that takes off fast – and

loose TV culture and narrative theory, among other things – is more worthy of inclusion here than 1954's *Messiah*, which in its creation of a cult of death is a chilling indictment of organised religion.

But space has forced Kaplan not only to choose but also to carve: with the exception of *Myra Breckinridge*, reproduced here in its full, upcious splendour, we are given chunks of novels, and this is frustrating. It is, perhaps, a good thing to read the old and new endings to *The City and the Pillar* – Vidal revised the book twice – side by side; but if you haven't read the book in the first place, why on earth would you want to read only the end?

This is not a problem where the essays are concerned, and Kaplan provides a good selection. What's marvellous about Vidal is the pleasant shiver of horrified anticipation that fills you upon seeing the title *Women's Liberation: Feminism and Its Discontents* – and then the discovery, or rediscovery, of his plain good sense. He is not a cynic; he writes movingly of the difficult; Vidal, Eleanor Roosevelt, of the world that seemed lost when she died in 1962 and he watched her cof-

fin roll by. "From 1950 on, our story has been progressively more and more squashed. Nor can one say it is a lack of the good and great in high places: they are always there when needed. Rather the corruption of empire has eroded the words themselves. Now we live in a society which none of us much likes; all would like to change, but no one knows how. Most ominous of all, there is now a sense that what has gone wrong for us may be irreversible... Whether or not one thought of Eleanor Roosevelt as a world omnibus or as a chronic explainer or as a scourge of the selfish/she was like no one else in her usefulness. As the box containing her went past me, I thought well, that's that. We're really on our own now."

So we are. We may be glad that Gore Vidal is with us still. But if you have never read his work, save your £25. Go to the library, or buy his novels and essays in paperback. Read him whole, and think for yourself as he would have you do.

THE ESSENTIAL GORE VIDAL
Edited by Fred Kaplan
Little, Brown, £25
ISBN 0 316 84809 9

Monster of the seabed

**Just when you thought it was safe:
David Bellamy finds a 60 ft squid**

Britain may once have ruled the waves but at the height of her power, when the great Challenger expedition first plumbed the depths of the world's oceans, evidence continued to accrue that a monster mollusc was the true master of the deep. One hundred years on – during which time sonar and other detection devices have allowed us to rape the womb of Mother Earth, sending the cetaceans, turtles and many fisheries to the brink of extinction – no one has ever seen *Architeuthis*, the monster of the deep, alive, and lived to tell the tale... or have they?

Mystery or imagination, what are the facts about the giant squid? Well there is no need to hold your breath any longer, except perhaps when walking on the beach, for the information is in this fascinating book.

Giant squids up to 60 ft long (and possibly over four times that length) exist in all the oceans of the world. You may be lucky and find a carcass rotting on the beach – if so be sure to photograph it and inform the local university. How many people have been snatched to a fate worse than death? We shall never know.

The good news is that such devious seem unlikely, for the guts of all the giants found on the strand to date have

**THE SEARCH FOR
THE GIANT SQUID**
By Richard Ellis
Robert Hale, £25
ISBN 0 7090 6433 0



been devoid of identifiable remains. What is more, as the stranded males are often ripe with sperm packs, the theory goes that they only venture into the shallows to find a mate and they do this sans wedding breakfast. Although both sexes can glow with an eerie phosphorescence, it could be that despite their dinner-plate eyes they cannot locate a partner in the dark depths. There is also some evidence that like lesser squids, the giant squids in shoals, an awesome thought.

Giant squids certainly fight sperm whales, but so would you if you were being eaten. However, the whales appear always to make rings out of the monster calamaries. The



A giant squid fighting a whale: the number of people killed by squids is unknown

question then remains: could the air-breathing cephalopod ever be held down for the count by the master predator of the deep – who has no need to surface for a breath of air?

Dying whales have regurgitated chunks of *Architeuthis* (perhaps the only enlightening information that ever came from whaling, commercial or scientific) and an incredible 28,000 squid beaks were found in the stomach of one whale.

From this point on, science fact merges with fiction. It is estimated that before whaling took its toll there were about 10 million tonnes of sperm whales living in the oceans. To sustain this voracious army would take an annual catch of 100 million tonnes of squid – an amount greater than the weight of the whole human race. If, as research shows, only 0.26 per cent of these are *Architeuthis* it still means there must at least be a million of these monsters swimming.

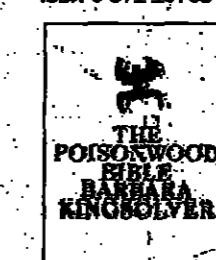
Perhaps it's time to make a sequel to *Jaws* – the film which gave sharks such a bad name. *Beaks* could begin with the same young lady fresh from sex on the beach in the grips of an amorous squid, so living to tell the tale and film it for posterity. When it comes to giant squids fact may be stranger than fiction. Read all about it.

Live by the book, die by the gun

CLAIREE MESSUD

THE POISONWOOD BIBLE:
By Barbara Kingsolver

Faber, £10.99
ISBN 0 571 19763 9



Ruth May, at only five is the best able to adapt to their new society and yet is more readily harmed by it alone.

The trials that confront the Prices worsen when the family stay on after Congo's independence in June, 1960. In the end, the family pay a terrible price for their missionary will – and yet, as Kingsolver makes clear, it is no greater a price than that paid by many Congolese families.

The Poisonwood Bible is an engrossing novel and an interesting one – not least because Kingsolver is adept at interweaving the Prices' individual traumas and the broader political intrigues of the time – but it is not an especially sophisticated literary undertaking. Kingsolver's characters are too easily divided into the good and the bad, and their political discussions tend to be didactic and unengaged. The lyrical passages are also often cloying and unconvincing.

But when the novel strives least for effect, it is both provocative and affecting, a glorified, post-colonial *Little Women*, which illustrates how profoundly both women and the world have changed.

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

SAVE ON THESE TITLES

IRIS: A MEMOIR OF IRIS MURDOCH
by John Bayley,
published by Gerald Duckworth.
RRP £16.95. You pay £14.95

Also save on two novels by Iris Murdoch:
The Bell; The Sea, The Sea
RRP £7.99. You pay £6.99 each

• FREE UK postage and packing • Delivery in 28 days
• Staff available: 8am-6pm, Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm, Sat & Sun

CALL: 0345 660 916 CALLS CHARGED AT LOCAL RATE

Call +44 898 194 459 from overseas and the Republic of Ireland.
Fax +44 1225 574 868. Email: bookshop@thetimes.co.uk

Please post coupon to: News Books, FREEPOST, PO Box 345, Falmouth, TR11 2BR. Please send me these books (order additional titles on a separate sheet):

Qty	Title/Author	Total Price
-----	--------------	-------------

Surname _____ Initial _____ Title _____

Address _____ Postcode _____ Tel _____

I enclose cheques/POIs payable to NEWS BOOKS for a total of £_____

Please write your name and address on the back of all cheques

Debit my Mastercard/Visa/AmEx, Switch or Delta account nr: _____

Print Name _____ Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

For Republic of Ireland and overseas orders add 20% to total book cost. Delivery is by airmail in Europe, surface to rest of world. (Airmail outside Europe add 35%). The suggested retail price of a book can be subject to change by the publisher without prior notice. Tick box if you prefer not to receive details of other offers

A gamble that doesn't pay off

TWELVE GRAND
The Gambler as Hero
By Jonathan Rendall
Yellow Jersey Press, £10
ISBN 0 224 05149 0



minutely dissolute, and self-destructively alcoholic as the journalist-novelist he plays in his own story?

To be frank, we don't much care. He stumbles through his own pages in a haze of booze, drugs and blotto-dom, doubly alienating when this reduces him to continuing his narrative in note form while idly wondering whether to nick the boodle and cheat Yellow Jersey out of its book. Not easy to read, stuff like that – or as he writes it, stuff like that.

While reading it, I noticed a profile by Rendall in one of the Sunday magazines of the smokier-player Jimmy White, who makes several cameo appearances in the novel. More blurring. Are we to assume Rendall is himself as deter-

Heroes at the heart of the enemy

GERALD JACOBS

FOLEY

The Spy Who Saved

10,000 Jews

By Michael Smith

Hodder & Stoughton, £20

ISBN 0 340 71850 1

THE GOOD GERMAN

OF NANKING

The Diaries of

John Rabe

Edited by

Erwin Wickert

Little, Brown, £18.99

ISBN 0 316 64807 8

energetic Christian, he set up a committee of Western residents of Nanking with the task of enforcing a safety zone for Chinese civilians in the face of a brutal, vengeful assault by the Japanese. The diary records the growing tribulations he and his colleagues faced and the bitter treatment of the inhabitants of Nanking by marauding Japanese soldiers. The widespread violation of women and girls and the wanton murder of adults and children is, for him, destruction barbaric beyond all comprehension".

T he outrage expressed by Rabe and other Ger-

mans in China is of course heavy with irony, given the events about to unfold "at home". Eventually Rabe's eyes are opened to this, and there is a short section included of his German diary dealing with the last days of the war and its immediate aftermath when Rabe and his family are suffering their own hardships and indignities.

Having witnessed the bestiality of the Japanese, Ger-

mans, Russians and indeed the Chinese, in contrasting the atrocity of war and its immediate after-

math when Rabe and his family are suffering their own hard-ship and indignities.

Although his employers offered him the chance of escape, Rabe decided to stick to his post, not for professional motives but for humanitarian ones. A dapper, diabetic,

Having witnessed the bestiality of the Japanese, Ger-

mans, Russians and indeed the Chinese, in contrasting the atrocity of war and its immediate after-

TO ADVERTISE CALL
0171 481 1989

CHECK-IN

FAX:
0171 782 7824

100 leading scheduled airlines

AIRLINE NETWORK

1,000,000 discount fares

USA & CANADA	
TORONTO £153	DENVER £224
PITTSBURGH £170	LAS VEGAS £224
CHARLOTTE £200	N. ORLEANS £224
DETROIT £200	PHOENIX £224
VANCOUVER £204	SEATTLE £224
Houston £206	HAWAII £315
DALLAS £206	CALGARY £334
ORLANDO 7nt HOLIDAY	
Departures up to 15/3/99 Incl. 7nts 3* hotel	£258
USA HOTELS	
ORLANDO fr £10 ppmt	
LOS ANGELES fr £13 ppmt	
BOSTON fr £13 ppmt	
NEW YORK fr £24 ppmt	
GREAT VALUE CAR RENTAL Alamo fr £16 per week	
HUNDREDS OF OTHER US CITIES AVAILABLE	

USA BEST BUYS	
NEW YORK £165	
WASHINGTON £165	
BOSTON £165	
ATLANTA £185	
TAMPA £188	
MARCO £188	
CHICAGO £198	
LOS ANGELES £224	
SAN FRANCISCO £224	

AUSTRALIA & NZ	
SYDNEY £503	MELBOURNE £537
BRISBANE £507	ADELAIDE £537
AUCKLAND £523	CAIRNS £544
AUSTRALIAN VISA SERVICE AVAILABLE	

AUSTRALIA SPECIAL	
Departures up to 31/3/99	£457

NEW ZEALAND HOTELS	
AUSTRALIAN HOTELS	fr £16 ppmt
CAR RENTAL	fr £18 ppmt
HOTEL PASSES	fr £19 per day



FAR EAST HOLIDAY OFFERS	
BANGKOK	5nts 4* Hotel 04/2 - 16/3 + £429
SINGAPORE	5nts 3* Hotel 01/3 - 16/3 + £439
HONG KONG	5nts 4* Hotel 01/2 - 21/3 + £469
LANGKAWI	7nts 3* Hotel 01/5 - 30/6 + £479
PHUKET	10nts 4* Hotel 01/5 - 19/6 + £499

SINGAPORE & BALI	
2nts SINGAPORE 3* Hotel	
7nts BALI 3* Hotel	

Departures up to 30/6/99	£559
--------------------------	-------------

REST OF THE WORLD	
CARDO	£194 S. AFRICA £316
NAROBI	£299 INDIA £319
HARARE	£300 MEXICO CITY £362
BANGKOK	£302 HONG KONG £376
BEIJING	£309 RIO D. JANEIRO £379
SINGAPORE	£309 MANILA £366

BUSINESS CLASS	
DUBAI	£2608 SINGAPORE £1077
NEW YORK	£658 HONG KONG £136
BANGKOK	£760 CALIFORNIA £1738
JO'BURG	£778 TOKYO £1786

AUSTRALIA SPECIAL

Departures up to 31/3/99

£1184*

Based on two passengers travelling

HOTELS

HOLIDAY INN, JO'BURG + £22 ppmt

HILTON, BALI + £28 ppmt

LE MERIDIEN, DUBAI + £34 ppmt

Accommodation based on twin share

TRAVEL EXTRAS

* Hotels * Insurance * Car Rental *

* Motorhomes * Villas * Coach tours

Accommodation based on twin share

REST OF THE WORLD 01772 727 727
FAR EAST HOLIDAYS 01772 727 757
BUSINESS CLASS 01772 727 747



ITV Teletext Page 275

ALL PRICES INCLUDE TAXES INCLUDED

HOTELS CAR HIRE TRAVEL INSURANCE TOURS CRUISES WORLDWIDE TAILORMADE

TRAILFINDERS

MORE THAN JUST LOW COST FLIGHTS WORLDWIDE

FOR YOUR FREE COPY OF THE TRAILFINDER MAGAZINE CALL 0171 938 3366 ANYTIME ATOL 1458 ABTA AT971 00781 OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK THE TRAVEL EXPERTS NO CREDIT CARD SURCHARGES

DIAL-A-FLIGHT

USA & CANADA
LONDON LONGHAUL TRAVEL 0171-938 3366 FIRST & BUSINESS CLASS 0171-938 3444 TRANSATLANTIC & EUROPEAN 0171-937 5400 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL 0121-238 1234 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL 0117-229 9000 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL 0141-353 2244 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL 0161-839 6669 FIRST & BUSINESS 0161-839 3434 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL 0191-261 2245 PLUS: HOTELS - STOPOVERS - CAR RENTAL - NIGHTSHARING 0870-333-3377

PENANG	
FROM £539	14 NTS
ACCOM. INC. BREAKFAST & TRANSFERS	
DESTINATION GROUP	

BALI	
FROM £599	7 nts
14 nts	Adult £689
	Child £319
	14 days £939
	Includes: 4 Flights with Virgin Atlantic, 1st Class Return, 4* Hotel, Breakfast & Transfers
	0171 400 7001
	www.destination-group.com
	OPEN 24HRS 0800-2400HRS 0800-2400HRS

DELTA WORLDWIDE
Drop in for fantastic fares...
Prices from and include all pre payable airport taxes

MAJOR USA
RESERVATIONS 0171 393 1065
SERVING YOU, THE TRAVELLER, SINCE 1974

FAR EAST
10 Days £439
Bangkok & Phuket & Krabi £595
Bangkok & Hong Kong £599
12 Days £599
Bangkok & Singapore & Penang £659
14 Days £719
Bangkok & Thailand & Hong Kong £839

MAJOR USA
RESERVATIONS 0171 393 1065
SERVING YOU, THE TRAVELLER, SINCE 1974

WORLDWIDE DISCOUNT FLIGHTS
ACCESS VISA WELCOME
DISCOUNTED INSURANCE
0181 669 8607

FLIGHT CENTRE ATOL 3712
Monument Travel
0171 393 1065

CUBA
£549
ALL INCLUSIVE
HOTELS & MEALS & SPORTS
FREE AIRPORT TRANSFERS
0171 916 2233

FLIGHTSEEKERS
0171 669 8607

LOW COST FLIGHTS
0171 663 4425

FLIGHT CENTRE ATOL 3712
Monument Travel
0171 393 1065

WORLDWIDE ADVENTURES ABROAD
Comfortable small group tours for all ages!
Excellent leaders, 3 and 4 Star hotels
24 HR BROCHURE HOTLINE

0114 247 3400

www.adventures-abroad.com
e-mail: abroad@globalnet.co.uk

DISNEY

7 nts 14 nts Adult £689
Child £319
£329
£339
£349
£359
£369
£379
£389
£399
£409
£419
£429
£439
£449
£459
£469
£479
£489
£499
£509
£519
£529
£539
£549
£559
£569
£579
£589
£599
£609
£619
£629
£639
£649
£659
£669
£679
£689
£699
£709
£719
£729
£739
£749
£759
£769
£779
£789
£799
£809
£819
£829
£839
£849
£859
£869
£879
£889
£899
£909
£919
£929
£939

Bargains of the week: play bridge in Hove; whisk your Valentine to Paris; take a trawler trip along the Vietnamese coast



Priced from £119. Details: 01298 871222

■ A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and farther afield, many at bargain prices

BRITISH ISLES

DISCOUNTS are available at a choice of youth hostels between February 20 and 28, with a 25 per cent reduction on an overnight stay — with breakfast or full board — at 16 locations in England and Wales. They include Hampstead, North London, where B&B is £13.90, and full board £19.70. Details: 01727 845047.

■ DALE Hill hotel and golf club in East Sussex has a two-for-one room offer this month and a two-for-one tee time deal next month. Two people sharing a room will pay £54, while two golfers can choose between the old course for £20 in midweek or the Ian Woosnam course for £40. Slightly higher prices apply at weekends. Details: 01800 200112.

■ THE natural beauty of the Ribble Valley, Lancashire, and the chance to improve one's own beauty are included in a weekend break with Andrew's Coaches from February 26. Leave from Derbyshire for two nights' half board plus beauty demonstrations at a former Victorian manor house with a leisure club and pool. Details: 01622 859803.



Take an Easter Break at picturesque Chilston Park in Kent



See the Norwegian fjords on a four-day trip at half term, sailing from Newcastle. A cabin for three nights is from £54

EUROPE

LAST-MINUTE love can be kindled this weekend because there is still time to book a Valentine's break, even though the day itself is on Sunday. *Tony Dove writes*. Paris is the obvious choice and Kirker Holidays has two nights' B&B at central hotels, champagne and a Seine cruise from £236, including Eurostar travel. Depart tomorrow, Saturday or Sunday. Details: 0171-231 3333.

■ CHILSTON Park, the 17th-century hotel at Lenham, Kent, filled with antiques and lit by candles at night, is offering Easter breaks complete with eggs and champagne, archery and falconry. Prices start from £179 for two nights. Details: 01622 859803.

■ BRUSSELS is equally easy to reach by Eurostar and Sol Melia is offering discounts this weekend at its new city centre hotel. A double room with breakfast costs £65 and Eurostar has return fares for £106. Details: hotel, 0800 962220; rail, 0900 186186.

Short Breaks is also featuring Valentine weekends in Brussels and in Antwerp, the world's diamond capital, from £154 for two nights with rail travel. Details: 0181-402 0007.

■ WHOLESALE French food and tours of the rolling countryside might be ideal attractions for more established couples this weekend, and Imtravel is offering two nights' half board at a *ferme-auberge* on the border of Flanders and Picardy for £82. The price of the break includes a Dover-to-Calais crossing for car and passengers on Saturday. Details: 01653 628862.

■ ROMANTICS who miss Valentine's Day can make amends by taking their partner on a proper holiday — and one of the best offers, starting with a flight from Gatwick on Tuesday, is a fortnight's half-board in Palma, Majorca, for £219 with First Choice. Details: 0870-750 0100.

■ CYPRUS is still marketing itself as the island of Aphrodite, goddess of love, and the prices are certainly attractive from Argo Holidays. Fly from Gatwick on February 21 or 28 and a week's self-catering in

Paphos costs £179. A fortnight's stay at the resort costs an extra £80, and flight-only deals are also available. Details: 0171-331 7070.

■ ISTANBUL is on offer from E269 for short breaks with Metak Holidays. Fly from Heathrow and spend three nights with breakfast in the Sunlight Hotel, close to the Blue Mosque and museums. Details: 0191-296 1313.

■ SKIING in Norway and a wide range of other winter sports are on offer from Scandinavian Travel Service for departures on February 13, 24 and April 14. Three nights' full board in Gala and return flights from Stansted cost from £270. Details: 0171-559 6666.

■ EASTER holidays will already be in some travellers' minds, and one of the most civilised ways of enjoying the break will surely be a six-day tour of Loire chateaux and vineyards with Arblaster & Clarke Wine Tours. The trip costs £499 with coach and overnight ferry travel (with cabin). Details: 01730 893344.

■ NORWAY's stunning coastline will be the backdrop for a series of four-day bargain cruises with Fjord Line, still available over half-term. Sail from Newcastle on the next

two Saturdays or Tuesdays for a 1,000-mile journey that takes in Stavanger and Haugesund, with an overnight stop at Bergen. Prices start at £54 for three nights cabin accommodation and breakfast, with children under 16 half-price. Details: 0171-730 2101.

■ WEEKEND breaks to New York are also on offer from Funway Holidays, with three nights at a central hotel costing £315, including flights from a choice of airports. Details: 0181-466 0222.

■ FLY down Mexico way on February 23 from Gatwick for a week's all-inclusive Thomson holiday in Puerto or Nuevo Vallarta, which will cost £499 with Lunn Poly. Details from Holiday Shops.

■ ALMOND Beach Village, a leading all-inclusive resort in Barbados with half a mile of beach, nine pools and a nine-hole golf course, is available at a £270 saving until March 19 from Thomas Cook Holidays.

A week's stay now costs £1,225 with return flights from Gatwick. Details: 01733 418450.

■ VIETNAM is a destination with a difference, and the Imaginative Traveller is adding extra spice to an eight-day trip, starting with a flight from Heathrow on February 20. A voyage along a spectacular coastline on a converted trawler and a three-day trek through a northern hill tribe region are included in the £720 package. Details: 0181-742 8612.

■ THE Maldives with a week's full board is available for £899 from Somak Holidays. Choose from resorts on neighbouring islands, with the chance to sail between them to share facilities that in-



A street vendor in Vietnam

clude watersports and fishing. The flights leave from Heathrow every Sunday in March. Details: 0181-423 3000.

■ BASK in Banjul is the suggestion of Eclipse, which is offering a week's B&B in The Gambia for £309 with a flight from Garwick on March 4. Details: 0990 010203.

All prices are per person and based on two sharing a room unless otherwise stated.

WEEKEND TRAVEL

See *The Times* on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER

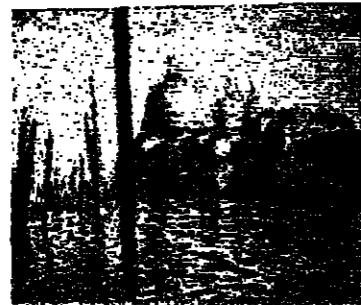
FREE MONET PRINT

To celebrate the Monet exhibition at the Royal Academy, *The Times* offers every reader a FREE Monet print, *The Bridge over the Waterlily Pond*, 1900, pictured right, worth £5.99. Simply collect four of the six tokens published this week and enclose four first-class stamps to cover postage. To order your free print, use the form, below, right.

You can buy the other five of the set of six superb prints, all 24in x 20in and specially printed on fine art paper, for only £5.99 each or just £19.95 for the complete set, saving £10.

You can order this outstanding collection, including the free print, for £19.95 now (no tokens required) by calling the 24-hour credit card orderline 01242 700700. An order form for the set of prints will be published in *The Times* tomorrow.

Five fine art Monet prints just £5.99 each. All six for £19.95, a saving of £10



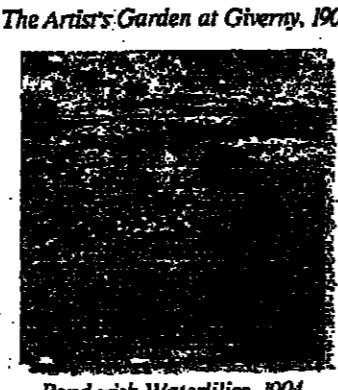
The Grand Canal, Venice, 1908



The Artist's Garden at Giverny, 1900



The Houses of Parliament, Sunset, 1904

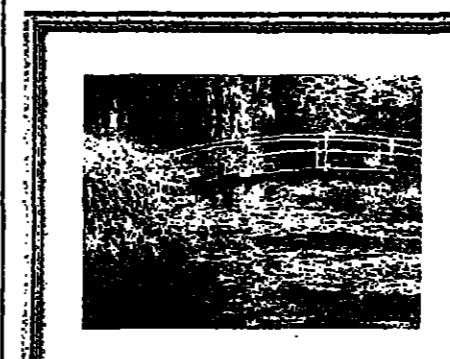


Pond with Waterlilies, 1904



Waterlilies with Weeping Willow, 1903

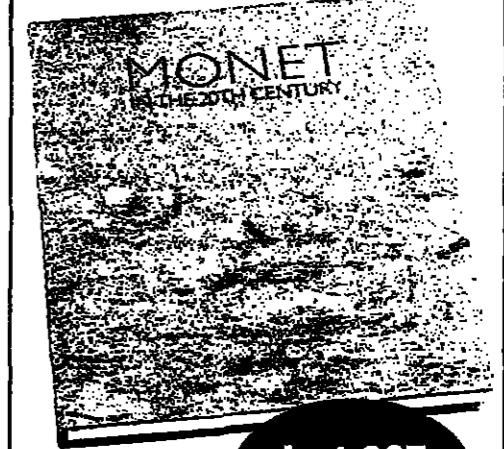
Frame your free print



Just
£29

A stylish gilt frame (26in x 22in) has been created specially to fit your free Monet print. Only £29, it comes complete with glass, backing board and is assembled ready to hang. The other five prints in the series are available in the same frame, priced at £39 each

Collector's catalogue



Just £27
inc p&p

Beautifully printed and bound, this fabulous official catalogue of the exhibition at the Royal Academy, contains the fascinating background to Monet's life and illustrates all the paintings on view. Only £27 to *Times* readers (normal price £30) including p&p

FREE MONET PRINT ORDER FORM

To receive your free Monet print complete this form and attach four differently numbered tokens from *The Times*, plus four first class stamps to cover postage. Post it to arrive by Monday March 1, 1999, to: *The Times* Free Monet Print Offer, Saxon House, Saxon Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 6QX. Offer subject to availability

Title _____ Initials _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Day tel. _____

Which one of the following age groups do you fall into?

15-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

If you buy *The Times*, on which day(s) do you usually buy it?

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday

Friday Saturday Don't usually buy *The Times*

Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy most often? (3-4 copies per month?)

Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy twice often? (1-2 copies per month?)

If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by *The Times*, please tick

T/1

CHANGING TIMES

OSI 20 HT 4P

Chris McGrath on a trainer seeking a change of Festival luck

Meade looks to cardinal rule

Nothing would put the Irish in better voice for Istabraq and Florida Pearl at next month's Cheltenham Festival than to hail success in its opening race for Noel Meade.

On the face of it, Cardinal Hill, who goes on trial at Punchestown on Sunday, has excellent prospects in the Citroen Supreme Novices' Hurdle — but he must exercise an apparent curse on his trainer. At Cheltenham, Meade is rather like a centre forward who scores hat-tricks with his eyes closed in the league, but is menaced by misfortune when representing his country.

He is not found wanting in skill or instinct, just plain unlucky. He hits the post, a teammate gets in the way, the ball is cleared off the line. Last year, when Hill Society blurted past the post in the Guinness Arkle Trophy alongside Martin Pipe's Champ leve, it hit the underside of the bar and bounced on the line. But the judge found in Champ leve's favour by the width of one of the many betting vouchers doomed by his decision.

Surrounded by fretful hundreds in the winner's enclosure, Meade had endured a cruel wait as a print of the finish was developed. Pipe, prolific at the Festival, agreed that a dead-head would do nicely as the minutes crawled by. They struck a curious contrast: Pipe hopping around like a restless, shrill bird, Meade rangy, rumbling and slack. For now, however, the Irishman did not smoke to be in harmony with his easy-going, open nature, but only to stop himself screaming with tension.

"Everyone on the way down said we'd won," Meade recalls. "But Richard [Dunwoody] said we might be ahead before and after, but beat on the line. That prepared me for the worst, anyway."

"Martin came up and said he thought he was beat. It took so long. Then, of course, I was number six, and he was 16, and the judge called it out: first number sixteen. It was heart-breaking."

Meade, 43, vacantly accepted the commiserations and turned on his heel. "I walked straight out to the car park and sat down on the bonnet of the car and had a smoke and a chat with one of the attendants, all about the joys of parking cars at Cheltenham. About



Meade narrowly missed a Cheltenham Festival winner last season with Hill Society

20 minutes or so. Just to get myself together again."

After all, he adds, it is only within the last five years that he has reversed the proportions of Flat and National Hunt horses in his Co Meath stables, so that three-quarters of his 80-odd horses are now jumpers.

Nonetheless the litany of Festival near-misses makes you wince. Even last year, Hill Society's defeat was compounded

by that of Avocat in the County Hurdle, after hitting the last.

In previous years, Meade had watched embellished brought down on the flat when cruising to the last in the Triumph Hurdle (in which he once saddled another short-head runner-up).

"Then there was Tiaman Square, who came up against Montelado, while Heister got beaten by Rhythm Section when he probably shoul-

lered. "Ninety-five per cent of the course is raceable and things have improved. However, prospects are no higher than 50-50. The forecast is for a frost of -4C tonight and, if that was the case, then we would be in trouble."

Officials at Newbury are more confident about their two-day fixture tomorrow and Saturday going ahead after the temperature rose enough yesterday for the frost to disappear.

Huntingdon waits on inspection

RACECOURSE officials are hoping that the forecast milder weather will arrive to mark a return to National Hunt racing after two blank jumping days.

Wincanton became the thirtieth meeting lost this season when today's fixture was called off yesterday. The off-jumper jump fixture, at Huntingdon, is subject to an inspection at 7.30am. Hugo Bevan, the clerk of the course, said yes-

terday: "Ninety-five per cent of the course is raceable and things have improved. However, prospects are no higher than 50-50. The forecast is for a frost of -4C tonight and, if that was the case, then we would be in trouble."

Officials at Newbury are more confident about their two-day fixture tomorrow and Saturday going ahead after the temperature rose enough yesterday for the frost to disappear.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT
Often refusing to overruff will strengthen your trump holding. This example is from the 1998 BBL Premier League.

Dealer North
Love all IMPs
♦ K 10 9 6 4
♥ J 9 8
♦ 10 7
♦ 9 7
♣ A
♦ 8 5 4 2
♥ Q 10 5 5
♦ K 10 8

Contract: Two Spades Doubled, by South. Lead: ace of hearts.

North opened a "multi-coloured" Two Diamonds, showing a Weak Two in one of the majors. South replied Two Spades, saying that was where he wanted to play if North had spades — clearly the bid implies some heart support; as if North had hearts, they would have to play in at least Three Hearts. West doubled Two Spades for take-out, and East had little choice but to make a penalty pass.

The defence began with ace, king and six of hearts. East ruffed the third round and returning the jack of clubs. West took declarer's king with the ace and played the ten of hearts. Declarer ruffed in dummy with the nine, and Gunnar Hallberg (East) made the good play of discarding a club. If he over-ruffs with the queen of spades his remaining three trumps fall under the ace, king and nine. But after his discard he held Q875 of spades over dummy's K10643, a holding worth two

tricks unless declarer could organise an endplay.

Declarer took the ace of spades, and then played off the ace and king of diamonds.

On the second diamond Hallberg followed with the queen. So declarer attempted to enter dummy with a club ruff; East overruffed and exited with a diamond, later scoring one more trump trick to beat the contract.

What had declarer missed?

It was that East, if he had Qx of diamonds and four clubs, would certainly have discarded a diamond on the ten of hearts. If declarer draws that inference, he can ruff a third round of diamonds low in dummy. That leaves a three-card ending with dummy and East holding nothing but trumps; declarer exits with a low trump, forcing East to give up his second trump trick in the two-card ending.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

A hundred years ago 1999 is the centenary of one great tournaments of all time — the competition held at London 1899 won overwhelmingly by Emanuel Lasker, the world champion, ahead of most of his leading rivals of the day.

Recent research has revealed that in games against the elite Lasker was the most successful with the black pieces. Here are the leading percentages, calculated by Professor Nathan Divinsky of top players against elite grandmasters only playing black: Lasker 62.8; Morphy 62.5; Kasparov 58.7; Capablanca 57; Fischer 55.5; Alekhine 52.9.

Today, in commemoration of Lasker's victory a hundred years ago I give one of his wins against a powerful Russian opponent from the London 1899 tournament.

White: Mikhail Chigorin

Black: Emanuel Lasker

London 1899

French Defence

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Nf6 4 c3 Bb7 5 Nc3 d5 6 d3 Ne7 7 Bg5 Nc6 8 Nf3 Bf5 9 Nc3 d4 10 Nf3 Ne7 11 Bf4 Nc6 12 Nc3 Bf5 13 Nf3 Ne7 14 Bg5 Nc6 15 Nc3 d4 16 Nf3 Ne7 17 Bf4 Nc6 18 Nc3 Bf5 19 Nf3 Ne7 20 Bg5 Nc6 21 Nc3 d4 22 Nf3 Ne7 23 Bf4 Nc6 24 Nc3 Bf5 25 Nf3 Ne7 26 Bg5 Nc6 27 Nc3 d4 28 Nf3 Ne7 29 Bf4 Nc6 30 Nc3 Bf5 31 Nf3 Ne7 32 Bg5 Nc6 33 Nc3 d4 34 Nf3 Ne7 35 Bf4 Nc6 36 Nc3 Bf5 37 Nf3 Ne7 38 Bg5 Nc6 39 Nc3 d4 40 Nf3 Ne7 41 Bf4 Nc6 42 Nc3 Bf5 43 Nf3 Ne7 44 Bg5 Nc6 45 Nc3 d4 46 Nf3 Ne7 47 Bf4 Nc6 48 Nc3 Bf5 49 Nf3 Ne7 50 Bg5 Nc6 51 Nc3 d4 52 Nf3 Ne7 53 Bf4 Nc6 54 Nc3 Bf5 55 Nf3 Ne7 56 Bg5 Nc6 57 Nc3 d4 58 Nf3 Ne7 59 Bf4 Nc6 60 Nc3 Bf5 61 Nf3 Ne7 62 Bg5 Nc6 63 Nc3 d4 64 Nf3 Ne7 65 Bf4 Nc6 66 Nc3 Bf5 67 Nf3 Ne7 68 Bg5 Nc6 69 Nc3 d4 70 Nf3 Ne7 71 Bf4 Nc6 72 Nc3 Bf5 73 Nf3 Ne7 74 Bg5 Nc6 75 Nc3 d4 76 Nf3 Ne7 77 Bf4 Nc6 78 Nc3 Bf5 79 Nf3 Ne7 80 Bg5 Nc6 81 Nc3 d4 82 Nf3 Ne7 83 Bf4 Nc6 84 Nc3 Bf5 85 Nf3 Ne7 86 Bg5 Nc6 87 Nc3 d4 88 Nf3 Ne7 89 Bf4 Nc6 90 Nc3 Bf5 91 Nf3 Ne7 92 Bg5 Nc6 93 Nc3 d4 94 Nf3 Ne7 95 Bf4 Nc6 96 Nc3 Bf5 97 Nf3 Ne7 98 Bg5 Nc6 99 Nc3 d4 100 Nf3 Ne7 101 Bf4 Nc6 102 Nc3 Bf5 103 Nf3 Ne7 104 Bg5 Nc6 105 Nc3 d4 106 Nf3 Ne7 107 Bf4 Nc6 108 Nc3 Bf5 109 Nf3 Ne7 110 Bg5 Nc6 111 Nc3 d4 112 Nf3 Ne7 113 Bf4 Nc6 114 Nc3 Bf5 115 Nf3 Ne7 116 Bg5 Nc6 117 Nc3 d4 118 Nf3 Ne7 119 Bf4 Nc6 120 Nc3 Bf5 121 Nf3 Ne7 122 Bg5 Nc6 123 Nc3 d4 124 Nf3 Ne7 125 Bf4 Nc6 126 Nc3 Bf5 127 Nf3 Ne7 128 Bg5 Nc6 129 Nc3 d4 130 Nf3 Ne7 131 Bf4 Nc6 132 Nc3 Bf5 133 Nf3 Ne7 134 Bg5 Nc6 135 Nc3 d4 136 Nf3 Ne7 137 Bf4 Nc6 138 Nc3 Bf5 139 Nf3 Ne7 140 Bg5 Nc6 141 Nc3 d4 142 Nf3 Ne7 143 Bf4 Nc6 144 Nc3 Bf5 145 Nf3 Ne7 146 Bg5 Nc6 147 Nc3 d4 148 Nf3 Ne7 149 Bf4 Nc6 150 Nc3 Bf5 151 Nf3 Ne7 152 Bg5 Nc6 153 Nc3 d4 154 Nf3 Ne7 155 Bf4 Nc6 156 Nc3 Bf5 157 Nf3 Ne7 158 Bg5 Nc6 159 Nc3 d4 160 Nf3 Ne7 161 Bf4 Nc6 162 Nc3 Bf5 163 Nf3 Ne7 164 Bg5 Nc6 165 Nc3 d4 166 Nf3 Ne7 167 Bf4 Nc6 168 Nc3 Bf5 169 Nf3 Ne7 170 Bg5 Nc6 171 Nc3 d4 172 Nf3 Ne7 173 Bf4 Nc6 174 Nc3 Bf5 175 Nf3 Ne7 176 Bg5 Nc6 177 Nc3 d4 178 Nf3 Ne7 179 Bf4 Nc6 180 Nc3 Bf5 181 Nf3 Ne7 182 Bg5 Nc6 183 Nc3 d4 184 Nf3 Ne7 185 Bf4 Nc6 186 Nc3 Bf5 187 Nf3 Ne7 188 Bg5 Nc6 189 Nc3 d4 190 Nf3 Ne7 191 Bf4 Nc6 192 Nc3 Bf5 193 Nf3 Ne7 194 Bg5 Nc6 195 Nc3 d4 196 Nf3 Ne7 197 Bf4 Nc6 198 Nc3 Bf5 199 Nf3 Ne7 200 Bg5 Nc6 201 Nc3 d4 202 Nf3 Ne7 203 Bf4 Nc6 204 Nc3 Bf5 205 Nf3 Ne7 206 Bg5 Nc6 207 Nc3 d4 208 Nf3 Ne7 209 Bf4 Nc6 210 Nc3 Bf5 211 Nf3 Ne7 212 Bg5 Nc6 213 Nc3 d4 214 Nf3 Ne7 215 Bf4 Nc6 216 Nc3 Bf5 217 Nf3 Ne7 218 Bg5 Nc6 219 Nc3 d4 220 Nf3 Ne7 221 Bf4 Nc6 222 Nc3 Bf5 223 Nf3 Ne7 224 Bg5 Nc6 225 Nc3 d4 226 Nf3 Ne7 227 Bf4 Nc6 228 Nc3 Bf5 229 Nf3 Ne7 230 Bg5 Nc6 231 Nc3 d4 232 Nf3 Ne7 233 Bf4 Nc6 234 Nc3 Bf5 235 Nf3 Ne7 236 Bg5 Nc6 237 Nc3 d4 238 Nf3 Ne7 239 Bf4 Nc6 240 Nc3 Bf5 241 Nf3 Ne7 242 Bg5 Nc6 243 Nc3 d4 244 Nf3 Ne7 245 Bf4 Nc6 246 Nc3 Bf5 247 Nf3 Ne7 248 Bg5 Nc6 249 Nc3 d4 250 Nf3 Ne7 251 Bf4 Nc6 252 Nc3 Bf5 253 Nf3 Ne7 254 Bg5 Nc6 255 Nc3 d4 256 Nf3 Ne7 257 Bf4 Nc6 258 Nc3 Bf5 259 Nf3 Ne7 260 Bg5 Nc6 261 Nc3 d4 262 Nf3 Ne7 263 Bf4 Nc6 264 Nc3 Bf5 265 Nf3 Ne7 266 Bg5 Nc6 267 Nc3 d4 268 Nf3 Ne7 269 Bf4 Nc6 270 Nc3 Bf5 271 Nf3 Ne7 272 Bg5 Nc6 273 Nc3 d4 274 Nf3 Ne7 275 Bf4 Nc6 276 Nc3 Bf5 277 Nf3 Ne7 278 Bg5 Nc6 279 Nc3 d4 280 Nf3 Ne7 281 Bf4 Nc6 282 Nc3 Bf5 283 Nf3 Ne7 284 Bg5 Nc6 285 Nc3 d4 286 Nf3 Ne7 287 Bf4 Nc6 288 Nc3 Bf5 289 Nf3 Ne7 290 Bg5 Nc6 291 Nc3 d4 292 Nf3 Ne7 293 Bf4 Nc6 294 Nc3 Bf5 295 Nf3 Ne7 296 Bg5 Nc6 297 Nc3 d4 298 Nf3 Ne7 299 Bf4 Nc6 300 Nc3 Bf5 301 Nf3 Ne7 302 Bg5 Nc6 303 Nc3 d4 304 Nf3 Ne7 305 Bf4 Nc6 306 Nc3 Bf5 307 Nf3 Ne7 308 Bg5 Nc6 309 Nc3 d4 310 Nf3 Ne7 311 Bf4 Nc6 312 Nc3 Bf5 313 Nf3 Ne7 314 Bg5 Nc6 315 Nc3 d4 316 Nf3 Ne7 317 Bf4 Nc6 318 Nc3 Bf5 319 Nf3 Ne7 320 Bg5 Nc6 321 Nc3 d4 322 Nf3 Ne7 323 Bf4 Nc6 324 Nc3 Bf5 325 Nf3 Ne7 326 Bg5 Nc6 327 Nc3 d4 328 Nf3 Ne7 329 Bf4 Nc6 330 Nc3 Bf5 331 Nf3 Ne7 332 Bg5 Nc6 333 Nc3 d4 334 Nf3 Ne7 335 Bf4 Nc6 336 Nc3 Bf5 337 Nf3 Ne7 338 Bg5 Nc6 339 Nc3 d4 340 Nf3 Ne7 341 Bf4 Nc6 342 Nc3 Bf5 343 Nf3 Ne7 344 Bg5 Nc6 345 Nc3 d4 346 Nf3 Ne7 347 Bf4 Nc6 348 Nc3 Bf5 349 Nf3 Ne7 350 Bg5 Nc6 351 Nc3 d4 352 Nf3 Ne7 353 Bf4 Nc6 354 Nc3 Bf5 355 Nf3 Ne7 356 Bg5 Nc6 357 Nc3 d4 358 Nf3 Ne7 359 Bf4 Nc6 360 Nc3 Bf5 361 Nf3 Ne7 362 Bg5 Nc6 363 Nc3 d4 364 Nf3 Ne7 365 Bf4 Nc6 366 Nc3 Bf5 367 Nf3 Ne7 368 Bg5 Nc6 369 Nc3 d4 370 Nf3 Ne7 371 Bf4 Nc6 372 Nc3 Bf5 373 Nf3 Ne7 374 Bg5 Nc6 375 Nc3 d4 376 Nf3 Ne7 377 Bf4 Nc6 378 Nc3 Bf5 379 Nf3 Ne7 380 Bg5 Nc6 381 Nc3 d4 382 Nf3 Ne7 383 Bf4 Nc6 384 Nc3 Bf5 385 Nf3 Ne7 386 Bg5 Nc6 387 Nc3 d4 388 Nf3 Ne7 389 Bf4 Nc6 390 Nc3 Bf5 391 Nf3 Ne7 392 Bg5 Nc6 393 Nc3 d4 394 Nf3 Ne7 395 Bf4 Nc6 396 Nc3 Bf5 397 Nf3 Ne7 398 Bg5 Nc6 399 Nc3 d4 400 Nf3 Ne7 401 Bf4 Nc6 402 Nc3 Bf5 403 Nf3 Ne7 404 Bg5 Nc6 405 Nc3 d4 406 Nf3 Ne7 407 Bf4 Nc6 408 Nc3 Bf5 409 Nf3 Ne7 410 Bg5 Nc6 411 Nc3 d4 412 Nf3 Ne7 413 Bf4 Nc6 414 Nc3 Bf5 415 Nf3 Ne7 416 Bg5 Nc6 417 Nc3 d4 418 Nf3 Ne7 419 Bf4 Nc6 420 Nc3 Bf5 421 Nf3 Ne7 422 Bg5 Nc6 423 Nc3 d4 424 Nf3 Ne7 425 Bf4 Nc6 426 Nc3 Bf5 427 Nf3 Ne7 428 Bg5 Nc6 429 Nc3 d4 430 Nf3 Ne7 431 Bf4 Nc6 432 Nc3 Bf5 433 Nf3 Ne7 434 Bg5 Nc6 435 Nc3 d4 436 Nf3 Ne7 437 Bf4 Nc6 438 Nc3 Bf5 439 Nf3 Ne7 440 Bg5 Nc6 441 Nc3 d4 442 Nf3 Ne7 443 Bf4 Nc6 444 Nc3 Bf5 445 Nf3 Ne7 446 Bg5 Nc6 447 Nc3 d4 448 Nf3 Ne7 449 Bf4 Nc6 450 Nc3 Bf5 451 Nf3 Ne7 452 Bg5 Nc6 453 Nc3 d4 454 Nf3 Ne7 455 Bf4 Nc6 456 Nc3 Bf5 457 Nf3 Ne7 458 Bg5 Nc6 459 Nc3 d4 460 Nf3 Ne7 461 Bf4 Nc6 462 Nc3 Bf5 463 Nf3 Ne7 464 Bg5 Nc6 465 Nc3 d4 466 Nf3 Ne7 467 Bf4 Nc6 468 Nc3 Bf5 469 Nf3 Ne7 470 Bg5 Nc6 471 Nc3 d4 472 Nf3 Ne7 473 Bf4 Nc6 474 Nc3 Bf5 475 Nf3 Ne7 476 Bg5 Nc6 47

CRICKET

England bowlers build on Read's solid foundations

FROM THRASY PETROPOULOS IN BULAWAYO

BULAWAYO (second day of five): Zimbabwe A, with six first-innings wickets in hand, are 289 runs behind England A

UNDAUNTED by the prospect of a lifeless pitch and stifling conditions at Queens Sports Club, England A showed commendable spirit to bring the second international match here to life.

Frustrated, perhaps, by the batsmen's inability to make the most of a solid platform, the bowlers reduced Zimbabwe A to 94 for four in a lively

final session, still 90 runs short of avoiding the follow-on.

With Vikram Solanki suffering from a stiff neck after being hit by a stray cricket ball after close of play on the first day, England A's fortunes depended largely on Mal Loye. Loye, however, could only add 11 runs to his score before shouldering arms to Guy Whittall and falling leg-before.

Though inhibited in his movement, Solanki showed an impressive range of strokes in his half-century. One moment

Sometimes impish, always entertaining, Read's innings of 47 did as much for his reputation as it did for his side's position in the match. After being dropped a place in the order to No 8, his response reflected both character and ability.

England A's bowlers then set about consolidating on the newly gained momentum, at one stage taking three Zimbabwe A wickets for one run. Dean Cosker dismissing both Craig Wishart and Whittall and a decidedly sharp Steve Harmison having Trevor Madondo caught in the gully.

ENGLAND A: First Innings

D L Meaddy c Bishop b A R Whittall	64
W P Vaughan c A R Whittall b Strong	0
M B Loye bowled by J Whittall	132
A R Whittall c Bishop b Strong	23
J Whittall c Bishop b Strong	23
V S Solanki c Carter b A R Whittall	65
G J Read c Carter b A R Whittall	24
C M W P Cosker c Groom b A R Whittall	47
D A Cosker c Gun b G J Whittall	11
J D Lewin c Gun b Strong	1
S M Harmison not out	15
Ergon (2, 1b, 3, no 6)	35
Total	380

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-12, 2-134, 3-176, 4-181, 5-270, 6-313, 7-326, 8-361, 9-374

BOWLING: Bishop 20-4-62-2; Strong

37-12-102-2; G J Whittall 16-5-62-2; A R Whittall 16-5-62-4; Hodge 35-12-60-0.

Umpires: G R Evans and E J Gilmour

Defiant Papps gives New Zealand edge

FROM JOHN STERN IN WELLINGTON

WELLINGTON (third day of four): New Zealand Under-19, with four second-innings wickets in hand, are 192 runs ahead of England Under-19

BY THE END of this three-match series, the England Under-19 bowlers may be weary of seeing the name of Michael Papps on the scoreboard. In fact, they probably already are.

Papps, a short, compact opening bowler from Canterbury, completed his second century in consecutive internationals yesterday and again turned the game marginally back in favour of New Zealand. In the first match at New Plymouth, he made a dour 64 in the first innings and then a more aggressive 117 in the second.

Having made a duck on the first morning of this match, he dropped anchor again in the second innings, batting for more than seven hours to make an invaluable 127.

Scoreboard, page 45

Michael Gough, the England captain, little choice but to bowl his spinners. Graeme Bridge, the slow left-arm and a Durham team-mate of Gough, took three wickets in the final hour, including that of Papps, who was leg-before. England lead 1-0 in the series.

The world championships get under way in earnest for the Great Britain team in Vail today, with five racers competing in the final four technical events.

Tessa Pirie's thirteenth place in the women's combined is Britain's best result from the first week and the 20-year-old student will compete in the giant slalom today.

It is more than ten years since Britain had a woman

downhill and with Amanda Carrick-Anderson, who finished in eleventh place in the slalom in the last world championship in Sestriere, Italy, Carrick-Anderson, 23, is travelling and training with the Finland team,

which is restoring her mental strength after a wearing term-month tour alone last season.

"Last season was horrible I

was lonely," she said. "Training with the Finnish men and says he is skiing better than ever before.

Baxter has the distinction of being ranked second in the world for her age in giant slalom and third in the slalom.

Last season she won the Continental Cup series in Australasia, the youngest skier to do

so and the first British.

"I went into the downhill

with a clear mind, none of

that I'm from a small nation

stuff," because I know I am capable of it," Tessa Pirie said.

"The safest way to race is to attack the course and I attacked it big time. It was fast and I got big air off the jumps but I felt in control."

Britain's only male down-

hillier after the retirement of Graham and Martin Bell is Andrew Freshwater, 25, who

came 24th in the downhill but

was one of the later starters hampered by fresh snow.

Britain's youth learning fast

GRAHAM DUFFILL sees the country's hopes for the future show strength on the slopes

The women's giant slalom today will see the debut of Chemmy Alcott, 16, alongside Emma Carrick-Anderson, who finished in eleventh place in the slalom in the last world championship in Sestriere, Italy. Carrick-Anderson, 23, is travelling and training with the Finland team, which is restoring her mental strength after a wearing term-month tour alone last season.

Alcott has the distinction of being ranked second in the world for her age in giant slalom and third in the slalom.

Last season she won the Continental Cup series in Australasia, the youngest skier to do

so and the first British.

"I went into the downhill

with a clear mind, none of

that I'm from a small nation

stuff," because I know I am capable of it," Tessa Pirie said.

"The safest way to race is to attack the course and I attacked it big time. It was fast and I got big air off the jumps but I felt in control."

Britain's only male down-

hillier after the retirement of Graham and Martin Bell is Andrew Freshwater, 25, who

came 24th in the downhill but

was one of the later starters hampered by fresh snow.

(FIS) races. "I had a bit of a negative attitude after not qualifying in the top 30 in so many World Cups so I did some FIS races to get my head prepared," he said. "I was skiing technically well but not fast enough."

In the giant slalom, Ross Green will face Benjamin Raich, a former racing companion and one of the favourites.

Green compared his fortunes with those of the Austrian. "The first time I raced against Benny Raich he won and I finished tenth, but I was a lot closer him than I am now.

Since then he has probably

made about a million pounds

and has bought his own piste

at home that he trains on. I have made about £800."

Green's experience highlights how money and developing a youth team could turn the fortunes of British skiing around. "One of the biggest achievements has been getting the British junior team up and running again after a long gap," Mike Jardine, chief executive of the British Ski Federation, said.

"For the last five or six years we have been arguing for a junior team and we are beginning to see the benefits of it now."

Ian Baxter, who will

race in the giant slalom and

slalom, has been training with

the Finnish men and says he

is skiing better than ever before.

Baxter's world ranking

has leapt from No 540 two

years ago to 37 and he began

the season with a 32nd place

in the slalom in Park City.

Baxter has been preparing

for the world championship

by dropping to the lowest-level

circuit and competing in International Ski Federation

SNOOKER

Wembley crowd left wanting more

By PHIL YATES

SLOW hand-clapping and concerted boozing broke out at the Wembley Conference Centre yesterday when the crowd was denied the opportunity of witnessing the end of the second-round match between Peter Ebdon and Mark King at the Benson and Hedges Masters.

With Ebdon leading 5-4 and one frame away from a quarter-final against John Higgins, play was suspended in order to allow Ronnie O'Sullivan and James Wattana to begin their contest on time.

The suspension, at 5.55pm, some 50 minutes before O'Sullivan and Wattana were due to enter the arena, was only the third such occurrence in the 25-history of the event. It was unpopular with the crowd of 719 and the players alike.

"This is a bad decision," Ebdon said, on being informed of the news by Alan Chamberlain, the referee. King's aggrieved expression and body language left no doubt that he agreed.

The exchanges, although far from fluent, could not be described as tortuously slow. Failure to concede in a series of frames when an unlikely number of smokers were required, and regular toilet breaks between frames, had contributed to the problem.

King, who had prevailed in only one of his five matches this season before he edged out Jimmy White 6-5 on the pink in the wild-card play-off round on Sunday, recovered from a 2-0 deficit to lead 3-2 before Ebdon found his range.

Ebdon regained the advantage at 4-3. King won a scrappy eighth frame, but Ebdon claimed a low-scoring ninth.

The silver anniversary celebration of the Masters will feature a parade of former champions before the concluding session of the final on Sunday. Only Alex Higgins and John Spencer, because of ill-health, and Doug Mountjoy, who is coaching in the United Arab Emirates, will be absent.



RUGBY UNION

Problems pile up for Yates on two fronts

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE playing career of Kevin Yates, already damaged by an ear-biting controversy last year, could go into irretrievable decline if a charge of stamping is proved against him. Yates, the Bath loose-head prop capped twice by England during 1997, has been cited by Wasps after an incident during the Allied Dunbar Premiership match at Loftus Road on Sunday.

It is a year to the day since Yates, 26, was found guilty by a Rugby Football Union (RFU) disciplinary panel of biting the ear of Simon Fenn, the London Scottish flanker, during a cup match in January 1998. Though he has consistently pleaded his innocence, he was banned for six months and required to pay costs for the legal procedures, estimated at £23,000.

London Scottish have also claimed that Yates has yet to pay his contribution towards the costs of his legal hearings and have urged a worldwide ban on him until he does. He was required to contribute £10,000 in December and a further £10,000 in June, but Tony Tiarks, the chairman, said: "There was a judgment made, a schedule of costs awarded, but we haven't seen a penny." Wasps decided to cite Yates

after studying video evidence of an incident in the game on Sunday, during which Paul Volley, the Wasps flanker, received a gashed head that required seven stitches. If the case is proved, Yates could face another lengthy suspension and a blow to morale from which he might not recover. He has become accus-

ed by Clive Woodward, the England coach, is prepared to consider Joel Straszyk for England's World Cup squad next season. Straszyk, the fly half who dropped the goal that won the cup for South Africa against New Zealand in 1995, becomes eligible for England next September. "I would have no problem playing him if he is better than the players we've got," Woodward said.

Toured this season to gibe from visiting spectators, reminding him constantly of the ear-biting. Were he to receive a second public condemnation, he might feel that the game was no longer worth the candle.

Bath have stood by him steadily during their collective decline in fortunes, but they

would be forced to reconsider the terms of his contract. "We are investigating the claims," Bob Calleja, the Bath general manager, said.

Meanwhile, the North East

has been in a ferment of speculation concerning the future of Newcastle, the 1998 champions. Andy Hindle, the chairman of West Hartlepool, acknowledged that "the idea of a North East super-club is attractive", but his priority is to ensure West's survival in the first division this season.

The timing of Cameron Hall Developments' withdrawal from support of Newcastle has yet to be confirmed, but their 76 per cent shareholding in the club must first be offered to the Newcastle Gosforth Shareholders Association, which holds the other 24 per cent. "Only then could any serious discussions take place," Hindle said. He emphasised that, in the event of a merger, West would not be willing to participate as a junior partner.

Vaiga Tuigamala, who was due to play in the Premier League match against Richmond last night before a frozen Kingston Park pitch forced a postponement, has confirmed that he will set out the remaining 3½ years of his contract with Newcastle.

Doddie Weir, the Newcastle lock, will miss the Calcutta Cup match after breaking his ankle during Scotland's win over Wales last weekend. Ireland, who play Wales at Wembley on February 20, have recalled Andy Ward to the squad that lost 10-9 to France.

Dick Best, the director of rugby at London Irish who coached England to their 1992 grand slam, has been added to the selection panel for England A and several squads.

IRLAND SQUAD: Backs: C O'Brien (London), D. G. Jones (London), K. Lomax (London), K. Moore (Bath), J. Bell (Otago), R. Henderson (Wasps), G. Dempsey (Teeside), P. Wallace (Cardiff), P. Fitzpatrick (Dundalk), P. John (Harrow), R. Neale (Newcastle), P. John (Scarborough), J. Davids (Castres), M. Galway (Shannon), E. Williams (Teesside), D. O'Farrell (Cardiff), V. Cudmore (Scarborough), P. Brennan (St. Mary's College), A. Ward (Bathurst)

emerged in the knowledge that both England and France believe they have a strong fall-back position in the shape of the new pan-European tournament, which they believe would be attractive to Wales, Scotland and Ireland. It would involve up to 24 teams backed by their unions. Each participating side would be assured of £500,000 a year.

"This is a properly structured and financially sound proposal which is the most serious proposition yet," one official involved in the negotiations said. "If ERC say no to what England and France want, this proposal moves from the back burner to the front very quickly."

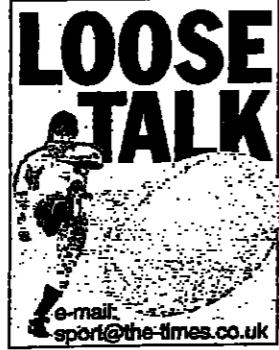
Some English officials distrust French motives, believing they are playing both ends against the middle. It is thought that ERC envisage a 20-strong tournament next year with five teams from both England and France, four from Wales, three from Ireland, two from Scotland and one from Italy. There might be some room for manoeuvre but not enough to meet English demands.

The development yesterday

that is understood that the proposition is laden with conditions that ERC is unlikely to countenance. These relate, among other things, to voting rights, distribution of revenue and levels of representation.

The development yesterday

RFU infighting erupts over handling of redundancies



Not content with its skirmishes with the International Board, the Five Nations and its clubs, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) is now embroiled in a little local difficulty. In the left-hand corner Francis Baron, the new Twickenham chief executive; in the right, Graeme Cartermole, the chairman of the finance committee.

At the meeting of the committee last month, Cartermole allegedly made derogatory remarks about Baron's handling of the recent wave of redundancies at HQ. Baron, who has written to every member of the RFU Council denying any wrongdoing and insisting that correct procedures were followed in the dismissal of staff. According to an insider, Cartermole believes that he should be on the management board and that his work is being overlooked.

When will it all end?

Flashback

Thanks are due to Jack Vosper, a loyal *7 Times* reader from Croxley Green in Hertfordshire, who offers an eyewitness account of the fastest try in Five Nations history – until John Leslie struck for Scotland at Murrayfield last weekend.

That is, Vosper, now 88, was a boy of 12 watching his first live international when Leo Price, a flanker, scored for England against Wales in 1923, in ten seconds. From the kick-off, Price caught the ball and dropped for goal. The Wales forwards thought the ball would go dead but it held up in the wind and they watched helplessly as Price touched down.

England won 7-4. According to the *Guinness Book of Records*, the quickest try in rugby was clocked at eight seconds. It was scored by Andrew Brown for Widen Old Boys against Old Ashtonians in 1990.

Going Dutch?

Among the 5,000 who watched London Irish at the weekend was Geoff Old, the New Zealander who is director of rugby for the Netherlands Rugby Board.

Old, who is planning for his team's World Cup repêchage matches later this year, was making inquiries about the availability of Jake Boer, the open-side flanker from Cape Town who has been storming around Sunbury this season. If Boer is interested, it will be for love, not money.

Under pressure

Still smarting from the national side's defeat against Scotland, Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) officials are bracing themselves this week for the arrival of the Rugby World Cup chairman, Leo Williams, who is expected in Cardiff to check that the Millennium Stadium will be ready to stage the World Cup final in November.

Williams has previously expressed concern that the building might be behind schedule. Meanwhile,

Graeme Griffiths, the WRU chairman, has guaranteed that the stadium will stage Wales v South Africa on June 26 with a reduced capacity of 48,000, rising to 72,000 by the start of the World Cup on October 1. If it is not, they might struggle to get the necessary safety certificate. Griffiths said: "I had three dreams – a new stadium to host the World Cup; and, of course, to win it." After the

drubbing on Saturday, mere pipedreams.

Cup celebration

Rugby union beware: Swinton were cruising to a comfortable Challenge Cup victory at home over the amateurs of Moldgreen when, in the 63rd minute, Moldgreen scored their only points. An overjoyed Ryan Waters, the centre, ran across to the visiting supporters and ripped off his shirt to reveal a black bra, which he ceremoniously tossed into the crowd. What the rest of his team-mates were wearing under their kit, we shall never know.

Congratulations to Colin Lamberti, of Syston, Leicestershire, who has won a pair of tickets to the Calcutta Cup game at Twickenham on Saturday, courtesy of The Famous Grouse Mr

Lamberti's entry was the first drawn out of the postbag that correctly identified Paul Burnell as the prop who played for Scotland in the grand-slam game in 1990 and also against South Africa last autumn. Two runners-up, Paul Dijkstra, of Beckingham, and A. O'Dell, of Runcorn, will each receive a bottle of whisky.

MARK SOUSTER

05/12/98



Roberts has made a striking impression for Bristol Rovers as they have progressed in the FA Cup this season

Roberts dreams of triumphant return to his Wembley roots

Russell Kempson talks to a player emerging from a tough background

When Jason Roberts was growing up on the notorious Stonebridge

Estate in Park Royal, in the badlands of northwest London, he would savour the matches at nearby Wembley Stadium. He could see the Twin Towers from his bedroom window, hear the roar of the crowd and dream of the day when perhaps he, too, would play at the highest level.

Football kept him out of trouble.

Otis Roberts, his uncle, a fringe player with Crystal Palace and Norwich City, taught him the tricks of the trade – be tough, be strong, be cool. "When I was ten, I used to play against all the big men," Roberts said. "They used to kick me terribly, but I loved it. It was great."

Stonebridge was a bad place, but it was fine for me because all my family were there. We were a tight-knit little community, we knew everyone. I grew there, I'm proud of it and I still go back when I can. It's nice to see some of my old friends."

Wembly is in his sights again. Roberts, 21, will play for Bristol Rovers, the Nationwide League second division side, against Barnsley, of the first division, in the FA Cup fifth round at Oakwell on Saturday. He has scored 15 goals

this season, 14 in the past 14 games including six in the Cup, and bubbles with enthusiasm.

He might facially resemble Andy Cole, but there is none of the brooding, surly demeanour of the England and Manchester United striker. Roberts is open, jaunty and possesses a cackling laugh that

turns heads in a packed room. He enjoys life and appreciates the opportunities that football is providing for him.

At 16, when Chelsea decided not to offer him an apprenticeship, the world closed in. His family had moved to Northolt, Middlesex, away from the deprivation of Stonebridge, but the pain of rejection ran deep.

"I lost heart, I didn't want to play any more," he said. "I dropped out. I was disillusioned and my first reaction was to forget all about football. I'd had enough."

Rehabilitation was slow but sure, aided by his family, religion – he prays before every match – and another uncle, Cyrille Regis, the former England player, who is now reserve team manager with West Bromwich Albion. Regis

was nearing the end of his playing career, with Wycombe Wanderers, and Roberts combined work as an export clerk for Jaguar with

appearances for Hayes. Hayes' former club, Cyrille was a big influence," Roberts said.

"He was living with us for about a year and I learnt a lot from him. He was an inspiration. I started enjoying my football again, left my job and trained full-time with Hayes. Then Wolves and Sunderland came in for me."

Stonebridge was a bad place but I am proud of it'

CRICKET

Scotland wait on Hamilton

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

SCOTLAND'S participation in this summer's World Cup may have been known for almost two years, but the reality hit home for George Salmon, their captain, today when the squad was named.

As anticipated, one of the 15 places has been left vacant until the England selectors confirm whether Gavin Hamilton, their captain, today

when the squad was named.

Jim Love and his fellow se-

lectors have put the emphasis firmly on experience, particularly in the batting order, where

Iain Philp and Bruce Patterson, boasting almost 200 caps and 75 years between them, have seen off challengers to their opening partnership.

Salmon said: "In three months we'll be on the world stage, and the prospect is a bit scary. But I'm convinced that we've picked a group of guys capable of lifting their game."

Scotland will need just that – their first game in the World Cup is against Australia, the favourites, at Worcester on May 16.

SQUADS: G. Salmon (Glasgow), captain, M. Allardice (Edinburgh), T. Banton (Edinburgh), J. Brinkley (unattached); A. Butt (Harrow), A. Davies (West Lothian), N. Dyer (Cricketers), B. Patterson (Ay) (Philips Semiconductor), K. Shand (Edinburgh), M. Smith (Edinburgh), I. Stansbie (Clydebank), P. Stirling (unattached), G. Williamson (Clydesdale)

BASKETBALL

TENNENT'S SCOTTISH CUP: Third-round replay

Postponed: Ross County v

CLYDESBURN

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES: Albania v

Macedonia 0 in Tirana, Oman 1 v Switzerland

2 in Amman, Poland 1 v Costa Rica

2 in Warsaw, Portugal 1 v Venezuela

2 in Lisbon, France 1 v Chile

2 in Paris, Germany 1 v Argentina

2 in Berlin, Italy 1 v Spain

2 in Rome, Turkey 1 v Mexico

2 in Istanbul, Greece 1 v Uruguay

2 in Athens, Costa Rica 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Buenos Aires, Brazil 1 v Mexico

2 in Rio de Janeiro, Argentina 1 v Chile

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

2 in Santiago, Chile 1 v Argentina

2 in Montevideo, Uruguay 1 v Chile

FOR THE RECORD

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

INTERNATIONAL MATCH: Wales 1

Northern Ireland 0

NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE: Donegal 2

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES: Albania 2

Macedonia 0 in Tirana, Oman 1 v Switzerland

2 in Amman, Poland 1 v Costa Rica

2 in Warsaw, Portugal 1 v Venezuela

2 in Lisbon, France 1 v Chile



Acclimatising: Rogers trains in North London in the clothes that he will wear in Antarctica in the first of his seven marathons on seven continents

He's the story of one sportsman who would undoubtedly test positive for what may be the most effective performance-enhancer of all — obsession.

While the tarnished fat cats of the International Olympic Committee were wasting hours and thousands of dollars debating whether sportsmen should be tested and banned for taking everything from poison to cough mixture, they might have been better employed working out what strange substance really makes a sportsman attempt something crazy.

Obsession is what does it for most of them and they don't come more obsessive than a fit, fair-haired runner from Chester, Tim Rogers. Today finds him somewhere close to the South Pole, limbering up for a marathon. Well, seven marathons, actually, for he is setting out on the most outrageous globe-trotting adventure that he and his support team could dream up. He is, he declared, about to slog his way through seven marathons on seven continents in 77 days.

At 35 years old, and with a full-time job working for the Littlewoods catalogue company, Rogers is one of that breed of runners who cover the distance, not to run fast times and carry off prizes, but to satisfy a personal obsession with a challenge. They are a breed let loose on the streets of Britain by Chris Brasher when he

The mother of all marathons



dreamt up the first London Marathon at the beginning of the 1980s. In April, thousands of them will be at it again in London, raising millions for charity.

But for the true obsessive, one marathon is never enough. They fear that running 26 miles has become too routine an affair — with grannies and people with one leg doing it — so they need to seek out ever stronger doses of the impossible. Hence the ambition of Tim Rogers. He wants his own spot in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

His preparation for the Antarctica Marathon will take in a stomach-testing ocean crossing through rough seas from Tierra del Fuego past Cape Horn to the bleak, ice-hard land where the Atlantic and Pacific oceans meet. This is not pleasant running country. It is an icy desert with the risk of blinding blizzards, and fewer than 160 runners, most of them from New Zealand, South Africa and the United States, will be making the start line on King George Island. It is only the third time

that this marathon has been staged and the organisers say it will be the last, so Rogers has only this one chance of fulfilling his obsessive dream.

"It will undoubtedly be the toughest marathon I will ever face," he said. "I dread the boat crossing. Apparently each time they've had this race some of the runners never get over the seasickness and can't even start it. But I've trained furiously for this and I'm determined not to collapse at the first hurdle."

After he runs in the Antarctic on Saturday, he has only a fortnight between each of his next two efforts — the Cape Town Marathon in South Africa on February 28 and the

Hong Kong on March 14. Just one week later he flies to Hawaii for the Maui Marathon on March 21, then it's back to Europe for the Paris Marathon on April 4.

Less than a fortnight after that, Rogers will leave his home in Chester for Chile and the Santiago Marathon on April 18.

Then he's off to the other side of the globe for the climax of his round-the-world in 77 days adventure — a run in the Rotorua Marathon in New Zealand on May 1.

The "record" that he hopes to beat on May Day belongs to a Japanese athlete, Hajime Nish, who ran marathons on seven continents in seven months.

Of course, being a genuinely obsessive marathon runner and traveller, Rogers has not stepped on to this crazy, record-setting treadmill overnight. During the past 18 months he has already knocked off 13 marathons in places as far flung as Costa Rica, Cape Town, Copenhagen and Sydney. Every time he puts on his racing shoes he

raises thousands for charity and on his latest adventure he is coining it for Comic Relief, Weston Spirit (a charity headed by the Falkland veteran, Simon Weston), Cottage Homes and a number of local charities.

Rogers knows that by attacking so many marathons he can never go for speed. He ran his fastest for the distance (a modest 3hr 50min) in Sydney, but only then because he had to. The start of the race was delayed by an hour and a half, which left him with a problem catching his flight home.

Less than a fortnight after that, Rogers will leave his home in Chester for Chile and the Santiago Marathon on April 18.

Then he's off to the other side of the globe for the climax of his round-the-world in 77 days adventure — a run in the Rotorua Marathon in New Zealand on May 1.

The "record" that he hopes to beat on May Day belongs to a Japanese athlete, Hajime Nish, who ran marathons on seven continents in seven months.

Of course, being a genuinely obsessive marathon runner and traveller, Rogers has not stepped on to this crazy, record-setting treadmill overnight. During the past 18 months he has already knocked off 13 marathons in places as far flung as Costa Rica, Cape Town, Copenhagen and Sydney. Every time he puts on his racing shoes he

JOHN BRYANT

DRUGS IN SPORT: SWIMMER AND SHOT PUTTER TO USE NEW EVIDENCE IN BID TO PROVE THEIR INNOCENCE

De Bruin's campaign lifted by revelation

BY DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

EVIDENCE which came to light yesterday that the security packs used to transport urine samples for drug-testing could be opened and resealed without detection has raised Michelle de Bruin's hopes of being cleared of a doping offence and has given Paul Edwards cause for double celebration.

De Bruin, who as Michelle Smith won three Olympic swimming gold medals for Ireland in 1996, said last night that her attempt to prove her innocence had been enhanced significantly by the development. Edwards, the Great Brit-

ain international shot putter, who was banned for life but freed yesterday to compete, pending a hearing, said he would use the new evidence as part of his defence.

Edwards was suspended in 1994 for four years and later banned for life for a second offence. However, UK Athletics has deemed that Edwards's hearing under the former governing body, the British Athletic Federation, was inadequate and the 1990 Commonwealth bronze medal-winner intends to compete on Saturday in an

open meeting at Crystal Palace, three days before his forthcoming birthday.

Dr David Brown, a chemist, has shown how the Versapak security containers used to collect the samples from Smith and Edwards could be tampered with by placing them in boiling water, opening the lid with a kitchen knife and resealing while leaving the ring-pull unopened. The UK Sports Council (UKSC) used the Versapak equipment for three years up to May 1998, before changing supplier. De Bruin's case is due to be heard by the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne on May 3.

Peter Lennon, De Bruin's legal adviser, said that this latest development would have a "very significant effect on

her case". Lennon added: "We had already raised at the doping control panel hearing the fact that we believed this was in the public domain by virtue of an Internet website. That was not accepted by the doping control panel in so far as they said it was a theoretical possibility and no more than that."

"Now that it has been proved by David Brown it does give lack of credibility to the argument by the Fina [international governing body] doping panel that if it was not the athlete, who else could it have been? There is now a credible argument that the Versapak kit system in operation at the time was rubbish."

Speaking on RTE, Irish radio last night, De Bruin said:

"This is only one string in our bow in terms of the evidence Peter will be bringing to Lausanne, but it certainly gives a lot of credence to what we knew all along, that this type of Versapak can be tampered with. It can be done in three minutes and it is impossible to detect the canister has been tampered with."

The UKSC attempted in a statement to "quash suggestions that the sample collection equipment used in recent years under its procedures could be manipulated easily". However, it stopped short of shooting down Dr Brown's evidence and declined to when questioned.

A spokesman for Versapak admitted that one of its products used until May last year could be tampered with. "We have not changed the material," the spokesman said. "What we did last year was to modify the design so that it is impossible to gain access to the container by this method. Opening the container when it was in common use in the past was a matter of opportunity, time, tools and motivation."

In explaining why Edwards had been allowed to return, Jayne Pearce, speaking for UK Athletics, said: "We have been advised that there were inconsistencies with regard to the hearing." Edwards said: "I have maintained from the beginning that the samples tested were either not mine or have been interfered with."

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 43

BULLI

(c) An eponym of Bulli, a town south of Sydney, New South Wales, used (chiefly attributively) to designate a type of soil used especially for cricket pitches.

DVORNIK

(c) A house-painter. The Russian dvor means a door. "I said goodnight to every one. I could hear the laughter as I waited at the bottom of the stairs for the dvornik to let me out."

GILLION

(a) A name sometimes used for 1,000 million by writers wishing to avoid the ambiguity between American and British uses of billion.

ANGAREB

(c) A stretcher or light bedstead used by the Arabs, and in Egypt and the Sudan. The native name.

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

1 Ne6! fx6 ... 2 Rh8+ Kg7 (2 Kxh8 3 Qxf7 threatening Rh) ... 3 Rh7+ Kh7 ... 4 Qf7+ Kh6 ... 5 Rh1 checkmate

□ Monday's solution should have been: 1 Qxe8+ Qxe8; 2 d7 Qd7; 3 Bg5 and wins



Edwards: banned for life



De Bruin: arbitration

CRUISES FROM £16,570. CALL 0800 110 110.

T registration arrives in March and now's the time to book on the Freddie and Gail for a cruise to the Azores. Model flights £249.95

ADRIAN SHERATT

TELEVISION CHOICE

Tonight is crime night

The Bill

ITV, 8.00pm

Thursday night is obviously crime night on ITV but both this one and the *The Knock* are worth singling out. In *The Age of Chivalry* an hysterical young woman is picked up by a paedophile as she staggers, muddled and bloodied, out of dark woodland. She is articulate (just) in her description of the two men who held her down and raped her and they are eventually traced to a local wine bar where one works as a waiter. He turns out to be the son of a strait-laced father and a long-suffering mother — and he hates women. Surprisingly, it is DCI Burnside (Christopher Ellison) who comes across as gentle and understanding — especially compared with his acid-tongued colleague Liz (Lobby Davies) when they cross-examine the pair. Burnside puts rape almost on a par with murder so why then does he allow both men to go free?

The Knock

ITV, 9.00pm

Cherie Lunghi continues to play the femme fatale of the "business world" (drug running to you and me) and it's worth watching this last of an often thrilling, certainly expensive (no faking the foreign locations here) series just to catch her face move in five different directions at once as she pursues sadists (apparently), drug barons (less apparently) and big money. Tonight's plot is up — in fact less — the three-part series involving heroin traffic from Bangkok through Delhi to Amsterdam and London. If the dialogue — "in my office — now!" — "you — a word!" — leaves something to be desired, the plot is so frenetic that blink and you could miss a clue. I'm still trying to work out who certain Mr Smoothie manages to smuggle in Mercedes cars by carting around wheelbarrows full of dirt. What have I missed here?

Meets the Ancestors

BBC2, 9.00pm

The Black Hand — a symbol of just that — runs through this archaeological mystery to make it one of the most fascinating programmes in the series. When a farmer near Chester investigates a strange mound on his land he begins an excavation of the remains of Poulton Chapel, built by Cistercian

monks in the 12th century. Archaeologists working with artists, genealogists and carbon dating equipment reconstruct this charming little abbey — but there's more. Among the people buried there it would seem that pride of place has gone to one Sir Nicholas Manley, a wealthy Anglo-Flemish whose family used the chapel in the 16th century. Manley? Man is French and his wife was apparently spectacular. His coat of arms was a black hand — could there be any living Manleys who might boast such an insignia? As the presenter Julian Richards reveals — there are, and they do!

Horizon: Elephants or Ivory
BBC2, 9.30pm

A documentary which in some ways covers old arguments but which will make you think afresh about the future of the African elephant. Adrian Pinnick's disturbing film travels to the greatest elephant reserves of Kenya and the Kruger National Park in South Africa. Viewers will hear for themselves the arguments of conservationists and ecologists and many of them feel that a sensible culling of the great creatures is not only to their advantage — there are now too many elephants to survive in their natural habitats — but that the desperately poor people of Zimbabwe need the profits that ivory would bring.

RADIO CHOICE

Performance on 3: London Mozart Players

Radio 3, 7.00pm

This is one of those occasions that demonstrates what Radio 3 should be all about and why it is crucially different from Classic FM. *Performance on 3* is at the heart of the live music policy at the network and tonight's gala concert from the Festival Hall, marking 50 years of the London Mozart Players, promises to be an extra-special occasion. The Players were formed by Harry Blech as a semi-professional group and few of the people involved in the early days could have dreamt that the orchestra's popularity and status would one day fill halls around the world. Tonight's concert includes the 28th and 29th Symphonies and the Concerto in C for Flute and Harp, featuring James Galway and Marisa Robles.

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00pm Kevin Greening 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Moyles 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Steve Lamacq The Evening Session 10.00 Trade Update 10.10 John Peel Session tracks from Comeback 12.00am Andy Kershaw 2.00 Clare Warren 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Alex Lester 9.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Richard Allinson 12.00pm Jeremy Young 2.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 Johnnie and Debbie 7.00 David Alan 8.00 Paul Jones 8.00 Punk and Dink 8.30 It's Been a Bad Week 9.00 The Right-Handed Bookend 10.00 Sports Round-Up 10.30 Sportsdesk 10.45 Performance 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 Assignment 12.00 World News 12.30 Sports Round-Up 1.00 Newsbeat 2.00 World News 2.05 Sports Round-Up 3.15 Westway 3.30 The Greenfield Collection 4.00 World News 4.15 Insight 4.30 The Good Relationship Guide 4.45 The Lab 5.00 Europe Today 5.30 World Business Report 5.45 Sports Round-Up 6.00 World News 6.15 Britain Today 6.30 The Works 7.00 Sports Round-Up 7.30 World News 7.45 The Works 7.55 One On One Correspondent 7.45 Off Side 8.00 Boyhood 8.00 Melvyn Bragg 9.00 Nicky Home 12.00am Katrina Leskanich 9.00 Mo Dutta

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 Breakfast with Julian Worricker and Victoria Derbyshire 9.00 Nick Campbell 12.00pm The Midday News 1.00 Ruscoe and Co 4.00 Drive 7.00 News Extra 10.00 Hardest Game 8.00 Inside Edge 8.00 Hoops 9.30 Sportshop 10.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00pm My Favourite Year 1.00 Anneastasia 3.00 Peter Doherty 5.00 The Sportzone 7.00 One to One with Andy Gray 8.00 James White 10.00 Ian Collins and the Creatures of the Night

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans 9.30 Mark Forrest 1.00pm Nick Abbott 4.00 Melvyn Bragg 4.30 Peter and Geoff 10.00 James Merritt 1.00am Steve Power 4.30 Richard Allen

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air with Petros Tzortzis with Penny Gore 10.30 Artist of the Week: Gino Gorz

11.00 Sound Stories: Five Femmes Fatales (4/5)

12.00pm Composer of the Week: Telemann

1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Lwei Qin, Gao, Gao, Gretel Dowswell, piano

2.00 BBC Orchestras BBC Philharmonic

4.00 Early Music with Vanya Sharp

5.00 In Tune with Sean O'Brien

7.00 Performance on 3 Live from the Festival Hall See Choice 8.10 London Mozart Players at 50 8.30 Concert part two

9.45 Postscript: Magnum at the Millennium The

10.00 From Our Own Correspondent

11.30 Radio 3 News series 1(5)

12.00 Radio 3 Headlines; Shipping Forecast

